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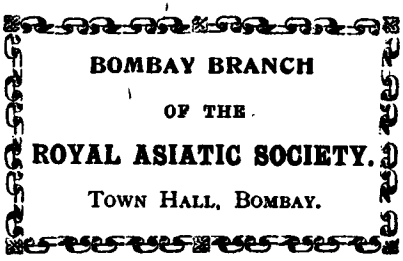

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Thomas Clarkson

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HISTORY

OF THE

RISE, PROGRESS, AND ACCOMPLISHMENT

OF

THE ABOLITION

OF THE

AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE

BY THE

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

BY THOMAS CLARKSON, M.A.

A NEW EDITION,

WITH

PREFATORY REMARKS ON THE SUBSEQUENT

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

26868

QC

LONDON:

JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

M.DCCC.XXXIX.

1839

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM, LORD GRENVILLE,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHARLES, EARL GREY,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE FRANCIS, EARL MOIRA,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE GEORGE JOHN, EARL SPENCER,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY RICHARD, LORD HOLLAND,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THOMAS, LORD ERSKINE,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDWARD, LORD ELLENBOROUGH,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD HENRY PETTY,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THOMAS GRENVILLE,

NINE OUT OF TWELVE OF HIS MAJESTY'S LATE CABINET MINISTERS,
TO WHOSE WISE AND VIRTUOUS ADMINISTRATION BELONGS
THE UNPARALLELED AND ETERNAL GLORY
OF THE ANNIHILATION,
AS FAR AS THEIR POWER EXTENDED,
OF ONE OF THE GREATEST SOURCES OF CRIMES AND SUFFERINGS,
EVER RECORDED IN THE ANNALS OF MANKIND;

AND TO THE MEMORIES OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM PITT,

AND OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHARLES JAMES FOX,

UNDER WHOSE FOSTERING INFLUENCE
THE GREAT WORK WAS BEGUN AND PROMOTED;

THIS HISTORY

OF

THE RISE, PROGRESS, AND ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE,

IS RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.

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PREFATORY REMARKS

TO

THE PRESENT EDITION.

THE invaluable services rendered by Thomas Clarkson to the great question of the Slave Trade in all its branches, have been universally acknowledged both at home and abroad, and have gained him a high place among the greatest benefactors of mankind. The History of the Abolition which this volume contains, affords some means of appreciating the extent of his sacrifices and his labours in this cause. But after these, with the unwearied exertions of William Wilberforce, had conducted its friends to their final triumph, in 1807, they did not then rest from their labours. There remained four most important objects, to which the anxious attention of all Abolitionists was now directed.

First,—The law had been passed, forced upon the Planters, the Traders, and the Parliament, by the voice of the people; and there was a necessity for keeping a watchful eye over its execution.

Secondly,—The statute, however rigorously it might be enforced, left, of course, the whole amount of the Foreign Slave traffic untouched, and it was infinitely to be desired that means should be adopted for extending our Abolition to other nations.

Thirdly,—Some compensation was due to Africa, for the countless miseries which our criminal conduct had for

ages inflicted upon her, and strict justice, to say nothing of common humanity and Christian charity, demanded that every means should be used for aiding in the progress of her civilization, and effacing as far as possible the dreadful marks which had been left upon her by our crimes.

Lastly,—Many of those whom we had transported by fraud and violence from their native country, and still more of the descendants of others who had fallen a sacrifice to our cruelties, and perished in the course of nature, slaves in a foreign land, remained to suffer the dreadful evils of West India bondage. It seemed to follow, that the earliest opportunity consistent with their own condition, should be taken to free those unhappy beings, the victims of our sordid cruelty; and all the more to be pitied, as we were all the more to be blamed, because one result of our transgression was the having placed them in so unnatural a position, that their enemies might seem to be furnished with an argument more plausible than sound, drawn from the Negro's supposed unfitness for immediate emancipation.

In order to promote these four great objects, a society was formed in May 1807, called the African Institution, and although, at first, its labours were chiefly directed to the portion of the subject relating to Africa, by degrees, as the extinction of the British Slave Trade was accomplished, its care was chiefly bestowed on West India matters, which were more within the power of this country than the slave traffic, still carried on by foreign nations. But it is necessary in the first place, to recite the measures by which our own share in that enormous crime was surrendered, and the stigma partially obliterated, which

it had brought upon our national character. Thomas Clarkson bore a forward and important part in all these useful and virtuous proceedings. His health was now, by rest among the Lakes of Westmoreland for several years, comparatively restored, and his mind once more bent itself to the accomplishment of the grand object of his life, we may be permitted reverently to suggest, the end of his existence.

Mr. Stephen and others, at first, deemed the certainty of the Act passed in March 1807, being evaded under the stimulus, and the insurance against capture afforded by the enormous profits of the traffic, so clear, that they expected the law to become, almost from the time of its being enacted, a dead letter. There soon appeared the strongest reasons to concur in this opinion, the result of long and close observation in the Islands where Mr. Stephen had passed part of his life. The slave-dealers knew the risk of penalty and forfeiture which they ran; but they also knew that if one voyage in three or four was successful, they were abundantly remunerated for all their losses; and, therefore, they were no more restrained by the Abolition Act, than by any moderate increase of the cost or the risk attending their wicked adventures. This was sure to be the case, as long as the law only treated slave-trading as a contraband commerce, subjecting those who drove it to nothing but pecuniary penalties. But it was equally evident that the same persons who made these calculations of profit and risk, while they only could lose the ship or the money by a seizure, would hesitate before they encountered the hazard of being tried as for a crime. And, surely, if ever there was an act which deserved to be declared felony, and dealt with as

such, it was this of slave-trading. Accordingly, in 1810, Mr. Brougham, then a member of the House of Commons, in moving an address to the crown, (which was unanimously agreed to,) for more vigorous measures against the traffic, both British and Foreign, gave notice of the Bill, which he next year carried through Parliament, and which declared the traffic to be a felony, punishable with transportation. Some years afterwards it was by another Act made capital, under the name of Piracy, but this has since been repealed. Several convictions have taken place under the former Act, (of 1811,) and there cannot be the least doubt that the law has proved effectual, and that the Slave Trade has long ceased to exist as far as the British dominions are concerned.

That foreign states continue shamefully to carry it on, is no less certain. There are yearly transported to Cuba and Brazil, above 100,000 unhappy beings, by the two weakest nations in Europe, and these two most entirely subject to the influence and even direct control of England. The inevitable consequence is, that more misery is now inflicted on Africa by the criminals, gently called Slave-traders, of these two guilty nations, than if there were no treaties for the abolition of the traffic. The number required is always carried over, and hence, as many perish by a miserable death in escaping from the cruisers, as reach their destination. The recitals of horror which have been made to Parliament and the country on this dreadful subject, are enough to curdle the blood in the veins and heart of any one endued with the common feelings of humanity. The whole system of prevention, or rather of capture, after the crime has been committed, seems framed with a view to exasperate the evils of the

infernal traffic, to scourge Africa with more intolerable torments, and to make human blood be spilt like water. Our cruisers are excited to an active discharge of their duty, by the benefit of sharing in the price fetched when the captured ship is condemned and sold; but this is a small sum, indeed, compared with the rich reward of head-money held out, being so much for every slave taken on board. It is thus made the direct interest of these cruisers, that the vessels should have their human cargoes on board, rather than be prevented from shipping them. True, this vile policy may prove less mischievous where no treaty exists, giving a right to seize when there are no slaves in the vessel, because here a slave ship is suffered to pass, how clear soever her destination might be; yet, even here, the inducement to send in boats, and seize as soon as a slave or two may be on board, is removed, and the cruiser is told, "only let all these wretched beings be torn from their country, and safely lodged in the vessel's hold, and your reward is great and sure." Then, whenever there is an outfit clause, that is a power to seize vessels fitted for the traffic, this mischievous plan tends directly to make the cruiser let the slaver make ready and put to sea, or it has no tendency or meaning at all. Accordingly, the course is for the cruiser to stand out to sea, and not allow herself to be seen in the offing—the crime is consummated—the slaves are stowed away—the pirate-captain weighs anchor—the pirate-vessel freighted with victims, and manned by criminals fares forth—the cruiser, the British cruiser, gives chace—and then begin those scenes of horror, surpassing all that the poet ever conceived, whose theme was the torments of the damned and the wickedness of

the fiends. Casks are filled with the slaves, and in these they are stowed away; or to lighten the vessel, they are flung overboard by the score; sometimes they are flung overboard in casks, that the chasing ship may be detained by endeavours to pick them up; the dying and the dead strew the deck; women giving birth to the fruit of the womb, amidst the corpses of their husbands and their children; and other, yet worse and nameless atrocities, fill up the terrible picture, of impotent justice and triumphant guilt. But the guilt is not all Spanish and Portuguese. The English Government can enforce its demands on the puny cabinets of Madrid and Lisbon, scarce conscious of a substantive existence, in all that concerns our petty interests: wherever justice and mercy to mankind demand our interference, there our voice sinks within us, and no sound is uttered. That any treaty without an outfit clause should be suffered to exist between powers so situated, is an outrage upon all justice, all reason, all common sense. But one thing is certain, that unless we are to go further, we have gone too far, and must in mercy to hapless Africa retrace our steps. Unless we really put the traffic down with a strong hand, and instantly, we must instantly repeal the treaties that pretended to abolish it, for these exacerbate the evil a hundred fold, and are ineffectual to any one purpose but putting money into the pockets of our men of war. The fact is as unquestionable, as it is appalling, that all our anxious endeavours to extinguish the Foreign Slave Trade, have ended in making it incomparably worse than it was before we pretended to put it down; that owing to our efforts, there are thrice the number of slaves yearly torn from Africa; and that wholly because of our efforts,

two thirds of these are murdered on the high seas and in the holds of the pirate vessels.

It is said, that when these scenes were described to an indignant nation last session of Parliament, the actual effects of this bad system were denied, though its tendency could not be disputed.

It was averred that "no British seaman could be capable of neglecting his duty for the sake of increasing the gains of the station." But nothing could be more absurd than this. Can the direct and inevitable tendency of the head-money system be doubted? Are cruisers the only men over whom motives have no influence? Then why offer a reward at all? When they want no stimulus to perform their duty, why tell them that if the ship is empty, they get a hundred pounds: if laden, five thousand? They know the rules of arithmetic;—they understand the force of numbers. But, in truth, there is not an individual on all the coast of Africa who will be misled by such appeals, or suffer all this to divert them from their purpose of denouncing the system. There are persons high in rank among the best servants of the crown, who know the facts from their own observations, and who are ready to bear witness to the truth, in spite of all the attempts that have been made to silence them.

The other great object of the African Institution regarded the West Indies. The preparation of the negroes for that freedom which was their absolute right, and could only be withheld for an hour, on the ground of their not being prepared for it, and therefore being better without it, was the first thing to be accomplished. Here the friends of the abolition, all but Mr. Stephen, suffered a great disappointment. He alone had uniformly foretold

that the hopes held out, as it seemed very reasonably, of better treatment resulting from the stoppage of the supply of hands, were fallacious. All else had supposed that interest might operate on men whom principle had failed to sway; that they whom no feelings of compassion for their fellow-creatures could move to do their duty, might be touched by a feeling of their own advantage, when interest coincided with duty. The Slave-mart is now closed, it was said; surely the stock on hand will be saved by all means, and not wasted when it can no longer be replaced. The argument was purposely rested on the low ground of regarding human beings as cattle, or even as inanimate chattels, and it was conceived that human life would be regarded of as much value as the wear and tear of beasts, of furniture, or of tools. Hence it was expected that a better system of treatment would follow, from the law which closed the African market, and warned every planter that his stock must be spared by better treatment, and kept up by breeding, since it no longer could be, as it hitherto had been, maintained by new supplies.

Two considerations were, in these arguments, kept out of view, both of a practical nature, and both known to Mr. Stephen,—the cultivation of the Islands by agents having wholly different interests from their masters, and the gambling spirit of trading and culture which long habit had implanted in the West Indian nature. The comforts of the slave depended infinitely more upon the agent on the spot, than the owner generally resident in the mother country; and though the interest of the latter might lead to the saving of negro life, and care for negro comforts, the agent had no such motives to influence his

conduct; besides, it was with the eyes of this agent that the planter must see, and he gave no credence to any accounts but his. Now the consequence of cruelty is to make men at war with its objects. No one but a most irritable person feels angry with his beast, and even the anger of such a person is of a moment's duration. But towards an inanimate chattel even the most irritable of sane men can feel nothing like rage. Why? Because in the one case there is little, in the other no conflict or resistance at all. It is otherwise with a slave; he is human, and can disobey—can even resist. This feeling always rankles in his oppressor's bosom, and makes the tyrannical superior hate, and the more oppress his slave. The agent on the spot feels thus, and thus acts; nor can the voice of the owner at a distance be heard, even if interest, clearly proved, were to prompt another course. But the chief cause of the evil is the spirit of speculation, and it affects and rules resident owners even more than absentees. Let sugar rise in price, and all cold calculations of ultimate loss to the gang are lost in the vehement thirst of great present gain. All, or nearly all, planters are in distressed circumstances. They look to the next few years as their time; and if the sun shines they must make hay. They are in the mine, toiling for a season, with every desire to escape and realize something to spend elsewhere. Therefore they make haste to be rich, and care little, should the speculation answer and much sugar bring in great gain, what becomes of the gang ten years hence. Add to all this, that any interference of the local legislatures to discourage sordid or cruel management, to clothe the slaves with rights, to prepare them for freedom by better education, to pave the way for emancipation by

restraining the master's power, to create an intermediate state of transition from slavery to freedom by partial liberty, as by attaching them to the soil, and placing them in the preparatory state through which our ancestors in Europe passed from bondage in gross to entire independence—all such measures were in the absolute discretion, not of the planters, but of the resident agents, one of the worst communities in the world, who had little interest in preparing for an event which they deprecated, and whose feelings of party, as well as individually, were all ranged on the oppressor's side. All this Mr. Stephen, enlightened by experience, and wise by long reflection, clearly and alone foresaw; all this vision of the future was too surely realized by the event. No improvement of treatment took place; no additional liberality in the supplies was shown; no abstinence in the exaction of labour appeared; no interference of the Colonial Legislature to check misconduct was witnessed; far less was the least disposition perceived to give any rights to the slaves, any security against oppression, any title independent of his master, any intermediate state or condition which might prepare him for freedom. It is enough to say, that a measure which every man, except Mr. Stephen, had regarded as the natural, almost the necessary effect of the abolition—attaching the slaves to the soil—was not so much as propounded, far less adopted; it may be even said, was never mentioned in any one local assembly of any of our numerous colonies, during the thirty years which elapsed between the abolition and the emancipation! This is unquestionable, and it is decisive.

As soon as it began to be perceived that such was likely to be the result of the abolition in regard to the emancipa-

tion, Mr. Stephen's authority with his coadjutors, always high, rose in proportion to the confirmations which the event had lent his predictions; and his zealous endeavours and unwearied labours for the subversion of the accursed system became both more extensive and more effectual. If, however, strict justice requires the tribute which we have paid to this eminent person's distinguished services, justice also renders it imperative on the historian of the Abolition in all its branches, to record an error into which he fell. Having originally maintained that the traffic would survive the Act of 1807, in which he was right, that Act only imposing pecuniary penalties, he persisted in the same opinion after the Act of 1811 had made slave-trading a felony; and long after it had been effectually put down in the British dominions, he continued to maintain that it was carried on nearly as much as ever, reasoning upon calculations drawn from the island returns. Hence he insisted upon a general Registry Act, as essential to prevent the continuance of an importation which had little or no real existence. The importance of such a measure was undeniable, with a view to secure the good treatment of the negroes in the islands; but the extinction of the Slave Trade had long before been effectually accomplished.

In the efforts to obtain Negro Emancipation, all the Abolitionists were now prepared to join. The conduct of the Colonial Assemblies having long shown the fallacy of those expectations which had been entertained of the good work being done in the islands as soon as the supply of new hands should be stopped by the Abolition, there remained no longer any doubt whatever, that the mother country alone could abate a nuisance hateful in

the sight of God and man. Constant opportunities were therefore offered to agitate this great question, which was taken up by the enlightened, the humane, and the religious, all over the empire.

The magnitude of the subject was indeed worthy of all the interest it excited. The destiny of nearly a million of human beings—nay, the question whether they should be treated as men with rational souls, or as the beasts which perish—should enjoy the liberty to which all God's creatures are entitled, as of right, or be harassed, oppressed, tormented, and stinted, both as regarded bodily food, and spiritual instruction—whether the colonies should be peopled with tyrants and barbarians, or inhabited by civilized and improving christian communities—was one calculated to put in action all the best principles of our nature, and to move all the noblest feelings of the human heart.

Thomas Clarkson, as far as his means extended, aided this great excitement. He renewed his committees of correspondence all over the country; aided by the Society of Friends, his early and steady coadjutors in this pious work, he recommenced the epistolary intercourse with the provinces, held for so many hopeless years on the Slave Trade, but now made far more promising by the victory which had been obtained, and by the unanimity with which all Abolitionists now were resolved to procure emancipation. He also recommenced his journeys through the different parts of the island, and visited in succession part of Scotland, almost all England, and the whole of Wales, encouraging and interesting the friends of humanity wherever he went, and forming local societies and committees for furthering the common object.

But it was, after all, in Parliament that the battle must be fought; and Mr. Buxton, of whose invaluable services in the House of Commons the cause has lately been deprived, repeatedly, with the support of Messrs. Wilberforce, William Smith, Brougham, Lushington, and others, urged the necessity of interference upon the representatives of a people unanimous in demanding it; and he repeatedly urged it in vain. The Government always leaned towards the planter, and the most flimsy excuses were constantly given for preferring to the effectual measures propounded by the Abolitionists, the most flimsy of expedients, useless for any one purpose, save that of making pretences and gaining time.

At length came the great case of the missionary Smith's persecution, trial, and untimely death, when all the forms of judicature had been prostituted, all the rules of law broken, all the principles of justice outraged, by men assuming to sit in judgment as a court of criminal jurisprudence; and though assisted by legal functionaries, exhibiting such a spectacle of daring violation of the most received and best known canons of procedure, as no civilized community ever before were called upon to endure. This subject was immediately brought before Parliament by Mr. Brougham, and his motion of censure, which might have been an impeachment of the governor and the court of Demerara, was powerfully supported by Mr. Wilberforce, the amiable, eloquent, and venerable leader of the party, Mr. Denman, Mr. Williams, and Dr. Lushington, but rejected by a majority of the Commons, whom Mr. Canning led, in a speech little worthy of his former exertions against the Slave Trade, and far from being creditable either to his judgment or to his princi-

ples. Yet this memorable debate was of singular service to the cause. The great speeches delivered were spread through all parts of the country; the nakedness of the horrid system was exposed; the corruptions as well as cruelty of slavery were laid bare; the determination of the colonies to protect its worst abuses was demonstrated; the necessity of the mother-country interfering with a strong hand was declared; and even the loss of the motion showed the people of England how much their own exertions were still required if they would see slavery extirpated, by proving that upon them alone the fate of the execrable system hung.

The effects of this great debate cannot be over estimated. The case of the missionary became the universal topic; the name of the martyred Smith, the general rallying cry. The superior interest excited by individual sufferings to any general misery inflicted upon masses of the people, or any evil, however gigantic, which operates over a large space, and in a course of time, has always been observed. The remark was peculiarly applicable in this instance. Although all reflecting men had, for many long years, been well aware of the evils pervading our colonial system, and though the iniquity and perverseness of West Indian judicatures had long been the topic of universal comment, yet this single case of a persecuted individual falling a victim to those gross perversions of law and justice which are familiar to the colonial people, produced an impression far more general and more deep than all that had ever been written or declaimed against the system of West India slavery; and looking back on the consummation of all our hopes in 1833 and 1838, we at once revert from this auspicious era to that ever

memorable occasion as having laid the solid foundation of our ultimate triumph.

In this important day, which has thus by its effects proved decisive of the Emancipation question, Mr. Stephen bore no part. He had long ceased to adorn and enlighten the House of Commons. His retirement was the result of honest differences of opinion respecting West India slavery with his political friends, then in the plenitude of their power. Those differences caused him to take the noble part, so rarely acted by politicians, of withdrawing from Parliament rather than lend his great support to men with whom he differed upon a question admitting no compromise; and he devoted his exertions in private life to the furtherance of the cause ever nearest his heart. The publication of his able and elaborate work on the Colonial Slave Laws was the fruit of his leisure; and had he never lent any other aid to the Emancipation, this would alone have placed him high among its most able and effective supporters. In all the consultations which were held before Mr. Brougham's motion in 1824, he bore an active and useful part. In pushing the advantages gained by the debate he was unwearied and successful. Unhappily it pleased Providence that he should not receive here below the final reward of his long and valued labours; for he was called to his final repose some months before the Emancipation Bill passed into a law.

There remains little to add, except that this measure, which was carried with little opposition in 1833, owed its success in Parliament to the ample bribe of twenty millions, by which the acquiescence of the West Indians was purchased. The measure had hardly come into operation, when all men perceived that the intermediate

state of apprenticeship was anything rather than a preparation for freedom, and anything rather than a mitigation of slavery. It is due to some able and distinguished friends of the negro race to state, that they all along were averse to this plan of a transition state. Lord Howick, then in the Colonial Office as Under-Secretary, went so far as to leave the department, from his dislike of this part of the measure. Mr. Buxton and others protested against it. Even its friends intimated that they wished the period of apprenticeship to end in 1838 instead of 1840; but there was a general belief of the preparatory step being necessary,—a belief apparently founded on experience of the negro character, and indeed of the vicious tendency of all slavery, to extinguish the power of voluntary labour, as well as to make the sudden change to freedom unsafe for the peace of the community. The fact soon dispersed these opinions. Antigua in a minute emancipated all her slaves to the number of thirty thousand and upwards. Not a complaint was ever heard of idleness or indolence; and, far from any breach of the peace being induced by the sudden change in the condition of the people, the Christmas of 1833 was the first, for the last twenty years, that martial law was not proclaimed, in order to preserve the public peace. Similar evidence from Jamaica and other islands, proving the industrious and peaceable habits of the apprentices, showed that there was nothing peculiar in the circumstances of Antigua.

An important occurrence is now to be recorded as having exercised a powerful influence upon the question of immediate emancipation. Joseph Sturge, of Birmingham, a member of the Society of Friends, stricken with a

sense of the injustice perpetrated against the African race, repaired to the West Indies, in order that he might examine, with his own eyes, the real state of the question between the two classes. He was accompanied by John Scoble and Thomas Harvey; and these able, excellent, and zealous men returned in a few months with such ample evidence of the effects produced by apprenticeship, and the fitness of the negroes for liberty, that the attention of the community was soon awakened to the subject, even more strenuously than it ever before had been; and the walls of Parliament were soon made once more to ring with the sufferings of the slave, only emancipated in name, and the injustice of withholding from him any longer the freedom which was his indefeasible right, as soon as he was shown capable of enjoying it beneficially for himself and safely for the rest of the community.

In these transactions, both in Jamaica, where he is one of the largest planters, and in Parliament, where he is one of the most respected members, the Marquess of Sligo bore an eminent and an honourable part. His praise has been justly sounded by all who have supported the cause of negro freedom, and his conduct was by all admitted to be as much marked by the disinterested virtue of a good citizen and amiable man, as it was by the sagacity and ability of an enlightened statesman. Both as governor of Jamaica, as the owner of slaves whom he voluntarily liberated, and as a peer of Parliament, his patriotism, his humanity, and his talents, shone conspicuously through this severe and glorious struggle.

While such was the conduct of those eminent philanthropists, some difference of opinion prevailed among the

other and older leaders of the cause, chiefly grounded upon doubts whether the arrangement made by Parliament in 1833, might not be regarded as a compact with the planters which it would be unjust to violate by terminating their right to the labour of the apprentices at a period earlier than the one fixed in the Emancipation Act. A little consideration of the question at issue soon dispelled those doubts, and removed every obstacle to united exertion, by restoring entire unanimity of opinion. The slaves, it was triumphantly affirmed, were no party to the compact. But moreover, the whole arrangement of the apprenticeship was intended as a benefit to them, by giving them the preparation thought to be required before they could, safely for themselves, be admitted to unrestricted freedom,—not as a benefit to the planters, whose acquiescence was purchased with the grant of twenty millions. Experience having shown that no preparation at all was required, it was preposterous to continue the restraint upon natural liberty an hour longer, as regarded the negroes,—the only party whom we had any right to consider in the question; and as for the planters there was the grossest absurdity in further regarding any interests or any claims of theirs. The arrangement of 1833, as far as regards the transition or intermediate state, had been made under an error in fact, an error propagated by the representations of the masters. That error was now at an end, and an immediate alteration of the provisions to which it had given rise was thus a matter of strict justice;—not to mention that the planters had failed to perform their part of the contract. The Colonial Assemblies had, except in Antigua, done nothing for the slave in return for the large sum bestowed upon

the West India body. So that in any view there was an end of all pretext for the further delay of right and justice.

The ground now taken by the whole Abolitionists, therefore, both in and out of Parliament was, that the two years which remained of the indentured apprenticeship must immediately be cut off, and freedom given to the slaves in August, 1838, instead of 1840. The peace of the West Indian community, and the real interests of the planters, were affirmed to be as much concerned in this change as the rights of the negroes themselves. Far from preparing them for becoming peaceable subjects and contented members of society at the end of their apprenticeship, those two years of compulsory labour would, it was justly observed, be a period of heart-burning and discontent between master and servant, which must, in the mean while, be dangerous to the peace of society, and must leave, at the end of the time, a feeling of mutual ill-will and distrust. The question could no longer be kept from the cognizance of the negro people. Indeed, their most anxious expectations were already pointed towards immediate liberty, and their strongest feelings were roused to obtain it.

Of these sentiments the whole community partook; meetings were everywhere held; petitions crowded the tables of Parliament; the press poured forth innumerable tracts which were eagerly received; the pulpit lent its aid to this holy cause; and discussions upon petitions and upon incidental motions shook the walls of Parliament, while they stimulated the zeal of the people. The Government adopted an unfortunate course, which contributed greatly to weaken their hold on the confidence

and affections of the country; they resisted all the motions that were made on behalf of the slaves, and appeared to regard only the interests of the master, turning a deaf ear to the arguments of right and of justice.

It was found, during the course of these debates, that a new Slave Trade had sprung up in the East Indies, with the sanction of an English Order in Council. Under pretence that hands were wanted to cultivate their estates, the Demerara planters had obtained permission to import what they termed, with a delicacy borrowed from the vocabulary of the African Slave Trade, "labourers" from Asia and from Africa east of the Cape, and to make them Indentured Apprentices for a term of years. No restrictions whatever were imposed by this unheard-of Order. No tonnage was required in proportion to the numbers shipped, no amount of provision, no medical assistance; no precautions were taken, or so much as thought of, to prevent kidnapping and fraud, nay, to prevent main-force being used in any part of Eastern Africa, or of all Asia, in carrying on board the victims of West Indian avarice; in short, a worse Slave Trade than the African was established, and all the dominions of the East India Company, with all the African and Asiatic coasts, as yet independent, were given over to its ravages. This was repeatedly denounced by Lord Brougham in the House of Lords; and although his motion for rescinding the order was supported by Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Ellenborough, and Lord Wharncliffe, the influence of the Government and the planters prevailed, and the House rejected it. A bill was afterwards brought in to check the enormities complained of; but no remedy at all effec-

tual is as yet applied. The official documents, however, proved that already men had been inveigled on board, by the agents of the Mauritius planters, in different parts of the East, and that the mortality on that comparatively short voyage exceeded even the dreadful waste of life which had characterized, and impressed with marks of horrid atrocity, the accursed Middle Passage.

This subject, as might well be expected, once more roused the energies of Thomas Clarkson: he addressed an able and convincing letter to Lord Brougham, his old friend and coadjutor in the sacred cause; and it was printed and universally circulated. The subject still remains unsettled: and the labours of the enlightened philanthropist cannot now be directed to one more important, or more urgent.

Meanwhile, in the spring of 1838, the question of Immediate Emancipation was agitated throughout the country. The Government proved hostile. Immense meetings were held at Exeter Hall, which were attended by many members of Parliament, over which Lord Brougham presided. Among others who were present and bore a distinguished part, were certain representatives of Ireland who promised their strenuous support. It is a painful duty to add, that their fellow-members from Ireland did not, on this great occasion, follow their good example; for eleven only of those, on whose votes reliance had been placed, opposed the Government, while no less than twenty-seven gave them support.

The question was rejected by the House of Lords, when brought forward by Lord Brougham; but in spite of the efforts of the Government, the defalcation of the Irish, of a still greater proportion of the Scotch represen-

tatives, two hundred and seventeen members of the House of Commons voted for Immediate Abolition, out of four hundred and eighty-nine who were present on the occasion. A second effort in the same session placed Ministers in a minority; but they immediately gave notice, they should strenuously oppose any attempt to carry into practical effect this decision of the House; and in this determination they were supported by a majority on a third division.

The word, however, had gone forth all over England, that the *Slave should be free.* It had not only pervaded Europe, it had reached America; and the West Indians at length perceived that they could no longer resist the voice of the British people, when it spoke the accents of humanity and of justice. The slaves would have met the dawn of the first of August,—the day which all the motions in Parliament and all the prayers of the petitions had fixed,—with perfect quiet, but with a resolute determination to do no work. The peace would not have been broken, but no more would a clod have been turned after that appointed sun had risen. A handful of whites surrounded by myriads of negroes,—now substantially free, and free without a blow,—must have been overwhelmed in an hour after sunrise on that day, had they resisted. The Colonial Legislatures, therefore, *now* listened to the voice of reason, and they, one after another, emancipated their slaves. The first of August saw not a bondsman, under whatever appellation, in any part of the Western Sea which owns the British rule.

The Mauritius, however, still held out, and on the Mauritius the hand of the Imperial Parliament must and

will be laid, to enforce mercy and justice on those to whom mercy and justice have so long called aloud in vain. In truth, if the case for instant emancipation was strong everywhere, it was in no quarter half so strong as in the Mauritius; and the distribution of the grant by Parliament to this Colony was the most unjustifiable, and even incomprehensible. For, elsewhere, there existed at least a title to the slave, over whom an unjust and unchristian law recognised the right of property. But in the Mauritius there was not, nor is there now, one negro to whom a good title is clearly provable. The atrocious conduct of Governors and other functionaries, in conniving at the Slave Trade of Eastern Africa, had filled that Colony with thousands of negroes, every one of whom was carried there by the commission of felony, long after Slave Trading had been declared a capital crime by the law of the land, as by the law of nature it always was. Sir George Murray, when Colonial Secretary of State, had admitted, that at least thirty thousand of the negroes in the settlement were nominally slaves, but in reality free, having been carried thither contrary to law. He understated it by twenty thousand or more: yet on all these negroes, in respect of property, were two millions and more claimed: for all these the compensation money was given and taken, which Parliament had lavishly bestowed. How then was it possible to doubt, that every slave in the Mauritius should receive his freedom, when the only ground alleged for not singling out and liberating this fifty thousand, was the inability to distinguish them from the rest? If ten men are tried for an offence, and it is clear that five are innocent, though you cannot distinguish them from their companions, what jury will hesi-

tate in acquitting the whole, on the ordinary principle of its being better five guilty should escape than five guiltless suffer? The same is still the state of the case in that most criminal settlement, which, having far surpassed all others in the enormity of its guilt, is now the only one where no attempt has been made to evince repentance by amendment of conduct. But the Government which has the power of compelling justice will share the crime which they refuse to prevent, and the Legislature must compel the Government, if their guilty reluctance shall continue, or it will take that guilt upon itself*.

The latest act of Thomas Clarkson's life has been one which, or rather the occasion for which, it is truly painful to contemplate; but this too must be recorded, or the present historical sketch would be incomplete. He whose days had all been spent in acts of kindness and of justice to others, was at last forced to exert his powers, supposed, by some, and erroneously supposed, to be enfeebled by age, in obtaining redress for his own wrongs. He whose thoughts had all been devoted to the service of his fellow-creatures, was now obliged to think of himself. A life spent in works of genuine philanthropy, alike standing aloof from party, and retiring with genuine humility from the public gaze, might have well hoped to escape that detraction, which is the lot of those who assume the

* It is truly gratifying to state, that the late Secretary for the Colonies, Lord Glenelg, has, since this was written, given the most satisfactory assurances of orders having been sent over for immediate emancipation, in case the former instructions to the Governor of Mauritius should have failed, to make the Colonists themselves adopt the measure. Lord Glenelg's conduct on this occasion is most creditable to him.

leading stations among their contemporaries, and mingle in the contentious scenes of worldly affairs. Or, at least, it might have been expected that his traducers would only be found among the oppressors of the New World, or the slave-traders of the Old. This felicity has not been his lot; and the evening of his days has been overcast by an assault upon his character, proceeding from the quarter of all others the most unexpected and the most strange.

The sons of his old and dear friend William Wilberforce,—whose incomparable merits he had ever been the first to acknowledge, whom he loved as a brother, and revered as the great leader of the cause to which his whole life had been devoted,—in publishing a Life of their illustrious parent, thought fit to charge Thomas Clarkson with having suppressed his services while he exaggerated his own; and not content with bringing a charge utterly groundless, (as it was instantly proved,) they deemed it worthy of their subject and of their name, to drag forth into the light of day a private correspondence of a delicate nature, with the purpose of proving that their father and others had assisted him with money, and that he had been pressing in his demands of a subscription. Two extracts of Letters of his were printed by these reverend gentlemen, upon which a statement was afterwards grounded in the *Edinburgh Review* of their book, that the subscription was raised to remunerate him for his services in the Abolition. They further asserted, that their father was in the field before him, and that it was under their father's direction that he, and the Abolition Committee of 1786, acted. In the whole history of controversy, we venture to affirm, there

never was an instance of so triumphant a refutation as that by which these slanderous aspersions were instantly refuted, and their authors and their accomplices reduced to a silence as prudent as discreditable.

The venerable philanthropist took up his pen, worn down in the cause of humanity and of justice. *First*, he showed, by incontrovertible evidence, the utter falsehood of the charge, that he had underrated the merits of others and exalted his own. These proofs were the references to his volumes themselves, which it really seemed as if the two reverend authors had never even looked into. He then proved to demonstration that he had taken the field earlier than William Wilberforce. This was shown, first, by known dates, matter of history; next, by letters from the friends of both parties, as Archdeacon Corbet and William Smith; but, lastly, by the words of William Wilberforce himself, as well privately as at public meetings, asserting that he (William Wilberforce) came into the field after his valued friend. But a striking fact may be cited, as a sample at once of the course pursued by the assailants, and the completeness of the defence. The reverend authors in proof of their unqualified assertion, that Thomas Clarkson and the Committee acted from the first under William Wilberforce's directions, refer to "MS. Minutes of the Committee" for their authority. But the friend who so ably superintended the publication of Thomas Clarkson's defence, and who added to that tract an appendix of singular merit and great interest (H. C. Robinson), showed that the parts referred to by the reverend authors, in proof of their assertion, completely disproved it; and that six months after the Committee had been working, William Wilberforce

applied to them for any information of which they might be possessed on the subject of the Slave Trade.

But the publication of the letters and the colour given to the transaction were far worse. The preservation of that correspondence, at all, by the sons, could only be justified by the belief of its being accidentally kept by the father, but, of course, never intended to be made public; least of all without the usual precaution of asking the writer's leave, and giving him the opportunity of explaining it. The biographers printed it without any kind of communication with him, and he saw it for the first time in print.

Then, the attempt was made to represent this pure, and valuable, and disinterested man as a mendicant philanthropist, who, for his exertions in the cause of justice, stooped to the humiliating attitude of collecting a remuneration from his friends. The words of William Wilberforce, and other Abolition leaders, prove that he had expended a very considerable portion of his own small patrimony in the cause, and that the subscription was to pay a debt,—a just and lawful debt; not to confer a bounty, or reward, or remuneration for services performed. It is also proved, that after being reimbursed to the amount of the sum contributed, or rather levied on those for whom the poorest of their body had advanced his own money, he remained out of pocket far more than others had ever given, after their share of the repayment was credited to them, in this debtor and creditor account.

But this is not all: Mr. Wilberforce himself, then a man of ample fortune, and Member for Yorkshire, had in 1807, published a pamphlet in the cause. The Minutes

of the Committee for 6th June, 1811, contained an entry of an order to pay 83*l.* out of the subscription funds to Mr. Cadell, being Mr. Wilberforce's share of the loss sustained by that publication. There had been no mention at all of this in his life, by these reverend authors, who scrupled not to print the garbled letters, with the manifest design of lowering the character of their father's friend, by ranking him among venal stipendiary pretenders to philanthropy, and jobbing mendicant patriots.

Wherefore, it may be asked, was this matter at all dragged forth to light, except to effect that unworthy purpose, and to give pain to a man as eminently as deservedly respected and beloved? The false pretext is, the vindication of their father's memory.—But it had never been attacked. They affect to suppose such an attack, that they may have a pretext for inflicting a wound in a fictitious and almost a fraudulent defence.—But if it had been ever so rudely attacked, the letters are no defence. For the only possible pretence of attack was the notion of Thomas Clarkson having assumed the priority, and these letters can have no earthly relation to that point. Whether Wilberforce, or Clarkson, or neither of them, first began the abolition struggle, is a question as utterly wide of the subscription as any one private matter in the life of either party can be of any one public transaction in which both were engaged.

The indignation of mankind was awakened by this disgraceful proceeding, and it was in vain that the friends of the Wilberforces urged, as some extenuation of their offence, the zeal which they naturally cherished for the memory of their parent. Men of reflection felt that no well-regulated mind can ever engage in slandering one

person for the purpose of elevating another. Men of ordinary discernment perceived that the assaults on Clarkson's reputation had no possible tendency to raise Wilberforce's reputation. Men of observation saw at once that there lurked behind the wish to praise the one party, a desire to wound the other; and gave them far less credit for over-anxiety to gratify their filial affections than eagerness to indulge their hostile feelings. It was plain, too, that they sought this gratification at the hazard of bringing a stain upon the memory of their father; for what could be more natural than the suspicion that they had obtained from him the materials out of which their web of detraction was woven? And what more discreditable to the author of the affectionate and familiar letters of Wilberforce to Clarkson than their discrepancy with the charges now urged against him? It is due to the memory of this venerable man, now gone to his rest, to say that no one who knew him, ever so slightly, could believe in the possibility of his holding one language to his friend and another to his children: far less of his bequeathing to them anything like materials for the attack upon one to whom he professed the most warm and steady attachment. But if such be the conclusion of all who knew the man, assuredly in arriving at it they have derived no help from the lights afforded by his family.

The vindication of Thomas Clarkson has been triumphant; the punishment of his traducers has been exemplary. His character stands higher than ever; his name is lofty and it is unsullied; they have a character to retrieve,—a name which they have tarnished since it descended upon them, they have to restore by their own future deserts.

The astonishment of the world was at its pitch when the champion of Abolition, the steady ally of Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharpe, the *Edinburgh Review*, was seen attempting to rescue these parties, and taking part against the injured man, the patriarch of a cause defended by that celebrated Journal during a brilliant period of much above thirty years. The boldness displayed in its pages on this occasion was excessive. As if feeling that the weak and indefensible part in the assault was the publishing of the letters, it had the confidence to affirm, that this proceeding was called for in justice to Wilberforce's memory. So daring an attempt upon the integrity of facts has not often been witnessed. What! The publication of these letters, which had no possible connexion with Wilberforce's character, (a character, indeed, that no one had assailed,) letters which were absolutely foreign even to the question of priority in the abolition cause,—the publication of these necessary to the defence of Wilberforce? Then, upon what ground necessary? How had he been attacked? Where was he to be defended? But, if attacked, how did the letters aid,—how connect themselves with,—how, in any manner of way, bear upon the defence, or any defence, or any portion of Wilberforce's character and life? They showed him to have contributed towards the payment of a debt he had contracted to Clarkson. But who had ever charged him with refusing to pay his debts? With his merits as to the Abolition, (if that be what is meant by his character,)—merits which it was a mere fabrication to pretend that Clarkson had ever been slow to acknowledge,—those letters had absolutely no possible connexion; and whoever, on this score, affects to defend this publication, is capable

of vindicating the printing any private letter upon the most delicate subject, by any man who writes the history of any other affair, or who writes on any subject from which the correspondence is wholly foreign. It is proper to add, that the editors of this Journal have most properly published a retractation of the charges made, in their ignorance of the whole facts of the case.

The acute and sagacious editor of T. Clarkson's vindication, has given his reasons for suspecting that this criticism, in the *Edinburgh Review*, must have proceeded from some party directly concerned in the publication of Wilberforce's life. We enter into no discussion of the circumstantial evidence adduced in favour of this supposition. The editors of the Journal are the parties to whom we look; and as they, after being to all appearance misled by some partial writer, have made the best reparation for an involuntary error, by doing justice to the injured party, we can have no further remark to make upon the subject.

But it is impossible to close these pages without mentioning the extraordinary merit of this latest, and, in all likelihood, this last production of Clarkson's pen. It is indeed a most able performance, and has been admired by some of the ablest controversial writers of the age, as a model of excellence in controversial writing. Plain, vigorous, convincing, perfectly calm and temperate, devoid of all acrimony, barely saying enough to repel unjust aggression without one word of retaliation, never losing sight for a moment of its purely defensive object, and accordingly, from the singleness of purpose with which that object is pursued, attaining it with the most triumphant success,—no wonder that the public judgment

has been loudly and universally pronounced in its favour, that its adversaries have been reduced to absolute silence, that its author's name has been exalted even higher than before it stood. But the wonder is to see such unimpaired vigour at four-score years of age, after a life of unwearied labour, latterly clouded by domestic calamity, and a spirit as young as ever in zeal for justice, tempered only by the mellowness which the kindly heart spreads over the fruits of the manly understanding.

There wanted no testimonials of esteem from his country to consummate the venerable philanthropist's renown; yet these too have been added. Various meetings have addressed their gratulations to him. Of these the great corporation of London claims the first regard, and after presenting him with the freedom of the city, they have ordered to be erected in their hall, as a memorial of his extraordinary virtue, a likeness of the mortal form of Thomas Clarkson.

HISTORY

OF THE

ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

CHAPTER I.

No subject more pleasing than that of the removal of evils.—Evils have existed almost from the beginning of the world; but there is a power in our nature to counteract them—this power increased by Christianity.—Of the evils removed by Christianity one of the greatest is the Slave Trade.—The joy we ought to feel on its abolition from a contemplation of the nature of it; and of the extent of it; and of the difficulty of subduing it.—Usefulness also of the contemplation of this subject.

I SCARCELY know of any subject, the contemplation of which is more pleasing, than that of the correction or of the removal of any of the acknowledged evils of life; for while we rejoice to think that the sufferings of our fellow-creatures have been thus, in any instance, relieved, we must rejoice equally to think, that our own moral condition must have been necessarily improved by the change.

That evils, both physical and moral, have existed long upon earth there can be no doubt. One of the sacred writers, to whom we more immediately appeal for the early history of mankind, informs us that the state of our first parents was a state of innocence and happiness; but that, soon after their creation, sin and misery entered into the world. The poets in their fables, most of which, however extravagant they may seem, had their origin in truth, speak the same language. Some of these represent the first condition of man by the figure of the golden, and his subsequent degeneracy and subjection to suffering by that of the silver, and afterwards of the iron age. Others tell us that the first female was made of clay; that she was called Pandora, because every

necessary gift, qualification, or endowment, was given to her by the gods, but that she received from Jupiter, at the same time, a box from which, when opened, a multitude of disorders sprung, and that these spread themselves immediately afterwards among all of the human race. Thus it appears, whatever authorities we consult, that those which may be termed the evils of life existed in the earliest times. And what does subsequent history, combined with our own experience, tell us, but that these have been continued, or that they have come down in different degrees through successive generations of men, in all the known countries of the universe, to the present day?

But though the inequality visible in the different conditions of life, and the passions interwoven into our nature, (both which have been allotted to us for wise purposes, and without which we could not easily afford a proof of the existence of that, which is denominated virtue,) have a tendency to produce vice and wretchedness among us, yet we see, in this our constitution, what may operate partially as preventives and correctives of them. If there be a radical propensity in our nature to do that which is wrong, there is, on the other hand, a counteracting power within it, or an impulse by means of the action of the divine Spirit upon our minds, which urges us to do that which is right. If the voice of temptation, clothed in musical and seducing accents, charms us one way, the voice of holiness, speaking to us from within, in a solemn and powerful manner, commands us another. Does one man obtain a victory over his corrupt affections? an immediate perception of pleasure, like the feeling of a reward divinely conferred upon him, is noticed. Does another fall prostrate beneath their power? a painful feeling, and such as pronounces to him the sentence of reproof and punishment is found to follow. If one, by suffering his heart to become hardened, oppresses a fellow-creature, the tear of sympathy starts up in the eye of another, and the latter instantly feels a desire, involuntarily generated, of flying to his relief. Thus impulses, feelings, and dispositions have been implanted in our nature, for the purpose of preventing and rectifying the evils of life. And as these have operated, so as to stimulate some men to lessen them by the

exercise of an amiable charity, so they have operated to stimulate others in various other ways to the same end. Hence the philosopher has left moral precepts behind him in favour of benevolence, and the legislator has endeavoured to prevent barbarous practices by the introduction of laws.

In consequence then of these impulses and feelings, by which the pure power in our nature is thus made to act as a check upon the evil part of it, and in consequence of the influence which philosophy and legislative wisdom have had in their respective provinces, there has been always, in all times and countries, a counteracting energy, which has opposed itself, more or less, to the crimes and miseries of mankind. But it seems to have been reserved for Christianity to increase this energy, and to give it the widest possible domain. It was reserved for her, under the same divine influence, to give the best views of the nature and of the present and future condition of man; to afford the best moral precepts, to communicate the most benign stimulus to the heart, to produce the most blameless conduct, and thus to cut off many of the causes of wretchedness, and to heal it wherever it was found. At her command, wherever she has been duly acknowledged, many of the evils of life have already fled. The prisoner of war is no longer led into the amphitheatre to become a gladiator, and to imbrue his hands in the blood of his fellow-captive for the sport of a thoughtless multitude. The stern priest, cruel through fanaticism and custom, no longer leads his fellow-creature to the altar to sacrifice him to fictitious gods. The venerable martyr, courageous through faith and the sanctity of his life, is no longer hurried to the flames. The haggard witch, poring over her incantations by moon-light, no longer scatters her superstitious poison among her miserable neighbours, nor suffers for her crime.

But in whatever way Christianity may have operated towards the increase of this energy, or towards a diminution of human misery, it has operated in none more powerfully than by the new views and consequent duties, which it introduced on the subject of charity, or practical benevolence and love. Men in ancient times looked upon their talents, of whatever description, as their

own, which they might use, or cease to use at their discretion. But the Author of our religion was the first who taught that, however in a legal point of view, the talent of individuals might belong exclusively to themselves, so that no other person had a right to demand the use of it by force, yet in the Christian dispensation they were but the stewards of it for good; that so much was expected from this stewardship, that it was difficult for those who were intrusted with it to enter into his spiritual kingdom; that these had no right to conceal their talent in a napkin, but that they were bound to dispense a portion of it to the relief of their fellow-creatures; and that, in proportion to the magnitude of it, they were accountable for the extensiveness of its use. He was the first who pronounced the misapplication of it to be a crime, and to be a crime of no ordinary dimensions. He was the first who broke down the boundary between Jew and Gentile, and, therefore, the first who pointed out to men the inhabitants of other countries, for the exercise of their philanthropy and love. Hence a distinction is to be made both in the principle and practice of charity, as existing in ancient or in modern times. Though the old philosophers, historians, and poets, frequently inculcated benevolence, we have no reason to conclude from any facts they have left us, that persons in their days did anything more than occasionally relieve an unfortunate object, who might present himself before them, or that, however they might deplore the existence of public evils among them, they joined in associations for their suppression, or that they carried their charity, as bodies of men, into other kingdoms. To Christianity alone we are indebted for the new and sublime spectacle, of seeing men going beyond the bounds of individual usefulness to each other; of seeing them associate for the extirpation of private and public misery; and of seeing them carry their charity, as a united brotherhood, into distant lands. And in this wider field of benevolence it would be unjust not to confess, that no country has shone with more true lustre than our own, there being scarcely any case of acknowledged affliction, for which some of her Christian children have not united in an attempt to provide relief.

Among the evils corrected or subdued, either by the general influence of Christianity on the minds of men, or by particular associations of Christians, the African* Slave Trade appears to me to have occupied the foremost place. The abolition of it, therefore, of which it has devolved upon me to write the history, should be accounted as one of the greatest blessings, and as such should be one of the most copious sources of our joy: indeed, I know of no evil, the removal of which should excite in us a higher degree of pleasure. For, in considerations of this kind, are we not usually influenced by circumstances? Are not our feelings usually affected according to the situation, or the magnitude, or the importance of these? Are they not more or less elevated, as the evil under our contemplation has been more or less productive of misery, or more or less productive of guilt? Are they not more or less elevated again, as we have found it more or less considerable in extent? Our sensations will undoubtedly be in proportion to such circumstances, or our joy to the appreciation or mensuration of the evil which has been removed.

To value the blessing of the abolition as we ought, or to appreciate the joy and gratitude which we ought to feel concerning it, we must enter a little into the circumstances of the trade. Our statement, however, of these needs not be long: a few pages will do all that is necessary! A glance only into such a subject as this will be sufficient to affect the heart,—to arouse our indignation and our pity,—and to teach us the importance of the victory obtained.

The first subject for consideration, towards enabling us to make the estimate in question, will be that of the nature of the evil belonging to the Slave Trade. This may be seen by examining it in three points of view. First, as it has been proved to arise on the Continent of Africa, in the course of reducing the inhabitants of it to slavery. Secondly, in the course of conveying them from thence to the lands or colonies of other nations. And, thirdly, in continuing them there as slaves.

* Slavery had been before annihilated by Christianity; I mean in the West of Europe, at the close of the twelfth century.

To see it, as it has been shown, to arise in the first case, let us suppose ourselves on the Continent just mentioned. Well then, we are landed,—We are already upon our travels,—We have just passed through one forest,—We are now come to a more open place, which indicates an approach to habitation. And what object is that which first obtrudes itself upon our sight? Who is that wretched woman whom we discover under that noble tree, wringing her hands, and beating her breast, as if in the agonies of despair? Three days has she been there, at intervals, to look and to watch; and this is the fourth morning, and no tidings of her children yet. Beneath its spreading boughs they were accustomed to play: but, alas! the savage man-stealer interrupted their playful mirth, and has taken them for ever from her sight.

But let us leave the cries of this unfortunate woman, and hasten into another district. And what do we first see here? Who is he that just now started across the narrow pathway, as if afraid of a human face? What is that sudden rustling among the leaves? Why are those persons flying from our approach, and hiding themselves in yon darkest thicket? Behold, as we get into the plain, a deserted village! The rice-field has been just trodden down around it; an aged man,—venerable by his silver beard,—lies wounded and dying near the threshold of his hut. War, suddenly instigated by avarice, has just visited the dwellings which we see. The old have been butchered, because unfit for slavery, and the young have been carried off, except such as have fallen in the conflict, or have escaped among the woods behind us.

But let us hasten from this cruel scene, which gives rise to so many melancholy reflections. Let us cross yon distant river, and enter into some new domain. But are we relieved even here from afflicting spectacles? Look at that immense crowd which appears to be gathered in a ring. See the accused innocent in the middle! The ordeal of poisonous water has been administered to him, as a test of his innocence or his guilt: he begins to be sick and pale. Alas! yon mournful shriek of his relatives confirms that the loss of his freedom is now sealed.

And whither shall we go now? the night is approaching fast. Let us find some friendly hut, where sleep may make us forget for a while the sorrows of the day. Behold a hospitable native ready to receive us at his door! let us avail ourselves of his kindness. And now let us give ourselves to repose. But why, when our eyelids are but just closed, do we find ourselves thus suddenly awakened? What is the meaning of the noise around us, of the trampling of people's feet, of the rustling of the bow, the quiver, and the lance? Let us rise up and inquire. Behold! the inhabitants are all alarmed! a wakeful woman has shown them yon distant column of smoke and blaze. The neighbouring village is on fire: the prince, unfaithful to the sacred duty of the protection of his subjects, has surrounded them. He is now burning their habitations, and seizing, as saleable booty, the fugitives from the flames.

Such then are some of the scenes that have been passing in Africa, in consequence of the existence of the Slave Trade; or such is the nature of the evil, as it has shown itself in the first of the cases we have noticed. Let us now estimate it as it has been proved to exist in the second; or let us examine the state of the unhappy Africans reduced to slavery in this manner, while on board the vessels, which are to convey them across the ocean to other lands. And here I must observe at once, that, as far as this part of the evil is concerned, I am at a loss to describe it. Where shall I find words to express properly their sorrow, as arising from the reflection of being parted for ever from their friends, their relatives, and their country? Where shall I find language to paint, in appropriate colours, the horror of mind brought on by thoughts of their future unknown destination, of which they can augur nothing but misery from all that they have yet seen? How shall I make known their situation, while labouring under painful disease, or while struggling in the suffocating holds of their prisons, like animals enclosed in an exhausted receiver? How shall I describe their feelings as exposed to all the personal indignities, which lawless appetite or brutal passion may suggest? How shall I exhibit their sufferings as determining to refuse sustenance and die, or as resolving to

break their chains, and, disdaining to live as slaves, to punish their oppressors? How shall I give an idea of their agony when under various punishments and tortures for their reputed crimes? Indeed, every part of this subject defies my powers, and I must, therefore, satisfy myself and the reader with a general representation, or in the words of a celebrated member of Parliament, that "Never was so much human suffering condensed in so small a space."

I come now to the evil, as it has been proved to arise in the third case; or to consider the situation of the unhappy victims of the trade, when their painful voyages are over, or after they have been landed upon their destined shores. And here we are to view them, first under the degrading light of cattle: we are to see them examined, handled, selected, separated, and sold. Alas! relatives are separated from relatives, as if, like cattle, they had no rational intellect, no power of feeling the nearness of relationship, nor sense of the duties belonging to the ties of life! We are next to see them labouring; and this for the benefit of those to whom they are under no obligation, by any law either natural or divine, to obey. We are to see them, if refusing the commands of their purchasers, however weary, or feeble, or indisposed, subject to corporal punishments, and if forcibly resisting them to death: we are to see them in a state of general degradation and misery. The knowledge which their oppressors have of their own crime, in having violated the rights of nature, and of the disposition of the injured to seek all opportunities of revenge, produces a fear which dictates to them the necessity of a system of treatment, by which they shall keep up a wide distinction between the two, and by which the noble feelings of the latter shall be kept down, and their spirits broken. We are to see them again subject to individual persecution, as anger, or malice, or any bad passion may suggest: hence the whip, the chain, the iron-collar! hence the various modes of private torture, of which so many accounts have been truly given. Nor can such horrible cruelties be discovered so as to be made punishable, while the testimony of any number of the oppressed is invalid against the oppressors, however they may be offences against the laws. And,

lastly, we are to see their innocent offspring, against whose personal liberty the shadow of an argument cannot be advanced, inheriting all the miseries of their parents' lot.

The evil then, as far as it has been hitherto viewed, presents to us, in its three several departments, a measure of human suffering not to be equalled—not to be calculated—not to described. But would that we could consider this part of the subject as dismissed! would that in each of the departments now examined there was no counterpart left us to contemplate! But this cannot be; for if there be persons who suffer unjustly there must be others who oppress: and if there be those who oppress, there must be to the suffering, which has been occasioned, a corresponding portion of immorality or guilt.

We are obliged then to view the counterpart of the evil in question, before we can make a proper estimate of the nature of it. And, in examining this part of it, we shall find that we have a no less frightful picture to behold than in the former cases; or that, while the miseries endured by the unfortunate Africans excite our pity on the one hand, the vices, which are connected with them, provoke our indignation and abhorrence on the other. The Slave Trade, in this point of view, must strike us as an immense mass of evil on account of the criminality attached to it, as displayed in the various branches of it, which have already been examined. For, to take the counterpart of the evil in the first of these, can we say that no moral turpitude is to be placed to the account of those, who, living on the continent of Africa, give birth to the enormities, which take place in consequence of the prosecution of this trade? Is not that man made morally worse, who is induced to become a tiger to his species, or who, instigated by avarice, lies in wait in the thicket to get possession of his fellow-man? Is no injustice manifest in the land, where the prince, unfaithful to his duty, seizes his innocent subjects, and sells them for slaves? Are no moral evils produced among those communities, which make war upon other communities for the sake of plunder, and without any previous provocation or offence? Does no crime attach to those, who accuse others falsely, or who multiply and divide crimes for the sake of the profit of the punish-

ment, and who for the same reason continue the use of barbarous and absurd ordeals as a test of innocence or guilt?

In the second of these branches, the counterpart of the evil is to be seen in the conduct of those who purchase the miserable natives in their own country, and convey them to distant lands. And here questions, similar to the former, may be asked. Do they experience no corruption of their nature, or become chargeable with no violation of right, who, when they go with their ships to this continent, know the enormities which their visits there will occasion, who buy their fellow-creature man, and this, knowing the way in which he comes into their hands, and who chain, and imprison, and scourge him? Do the moral feelings of those persons escape without injury, whose hearts are hardened? And can the hearts of those be otherwise than hardened, who are familiar with the tears and groans of innocent strangers forcibly torn away from every thing that is dear to them in life, who are accustomed to see them on board their vessels in a state of suffocation and in the agonies of despair, and who are themselves in the habit of the cruel use of arbitrary power?

The counterpart of the evil in its third branch is to be seen in the conduct of those, who, when these miserable people have been landed, purchase and carry them to their respective homes. And let us see whether a mass of wickedness is not generated also in the present case. Can those have nothing to answer for, who separate the faithful ties which nature and religion have created? Can their feelings be otherwise than corrupted, who consider their fellow-creatures as brutes, or treat those as cattle, who may become the temples of the Holy Spirit, and in whom the Divinity disdains not himself to dwell? Is there no injustice in forcing men to labour without wages? Is there no breach of duty, when we are commanded to clothe the naked, and feed the hungry, and visit the sick and in prison, in exposing them to want, in torturing them by cruel punishment, and in grinding them down by hard labour, so as to shorten their days? Is there no crime in adopting a system, which keeps down all the noble faculties of their souls, and which positively debases and corrupts their nature? Is there no crime in perpetuating these evils among their

innocent offspring? And finally, besides all these crimes, is there not naturally in the familiar sight of the exercise, but more especially in the exercise itself, of uncontrolled power, that which vitiates the internal man? In seeing misery stalk daily over the land, do not all become insensibly hardened? By giving birth to that misery themselves, do they not become abandoned? In what state of society are the corrupt appetites so easily, so quickly, and so frequently indulged, and where else, by means of frequent indulgence, do these experience such a monstrous growth? Where else is the temper subject to such frequent irritation, or passion to such little control? Yes—if the unhappy slave is in an unfortunate situation, so is the tyrant who holds him. Action and reaction are equal to each other, as well in the moral as in the natural world. You cannot exercise an improper dominion over a fellow-creature, but by a wise ordering of Providence you must necessarily injure yourself.

Having now considered the nature of the evil of the Slave Trade in its three separate departments of suffering, and in its corresponding counterparts of guilt, I shall make a few observations on the extent of it.

On this subject it must strike us, that the misery and the crimes included in the evil, as it has been found in Africa, were not like common maladies, which make a short or periodical visit and then are gone, but that they were continued daily. Nor were they like diseases, which from local causes attack a village or a town, and by the skill of the physician, under the blessing of Providence, are removed; but they affected a whole continent. The trade with all its horrors began at the river Senegal, and continued, winding with the coast, through its several geographical divisions to Cape Negro; a distance of more than three thousand miles. In various lines or paths formed at right angles from the shore, and passing into the heart of the country, slaves were procured and brought down. The distance, which many of them travelled, was immense. Those, who have been in Africa, have assured us, that they came as far as from the sources of their largest rivers, which we know to be many hundred miles inland, and the natives have told us, in their way of computation, that they came a journey of many moons.

It must strike us again, that the misery and the crimes, included in the evil, as it has been shown in the transportation, had no ordinary bounds. They were not to be seen in the crossing of a river, but of an ocean. They did not begin in the morning and end at night, but were continued for many weeks, and sometimes by casualties for a quarter of the year. They were not limited to the precincts of a solitary ship, but were spread among many vessels; and these were so constantly passing, that the ocean itself never ceased to be a witness of their existence.

And it must strike us, finally, that the misery and crimes, included in the evil as it has been found in foreign lands, were not confined within the shores of a little island. Most of the islands of a continent, and many of these of considerable population and extent, were filled with them. And the continent itself, to which these geographically belong, was widely polluted by their domain. Hence, if we were to take the vast extent of space occupied by these crimes and sufferings from the heart of Africa to its shores, and that which they filled on the continent of America and the islands adjacent, and were to join the crimes and sufferings in one to those in the other, by the crimes and sufferings which took place in the track of the vessels successively crossing the Atlantic, we should behold a vast belt as it were of physical and moral evil, reaching through land and ocean to the length of nearly half the circle of the globe.

The next view which I shall take of this evil will be as it relates to the difficulty of subduing it.

This difficulty may be supposed to have been more than ordinarily great. Many evils of a public nature, which existed in former times, were the offspring of ignorance and superstition, and they were subdued of course by the progress of light and knowledge. But the evil in question began in avarice. It was nursed also by worldly interest. It did not therefore so easily yield to the usual correctives of disorders in the world. We may observe also, that the interest by which it was thus supported, was not that of a few individuals, nor of one body, but of many bodies of men. It was interwoven again into the system of the commerce and of the revenue of nations. Hence the merchant—the planter—the mortgagee—the manufacturer

—the politician—the legislator—the cabinet-minister—lifted up their voices against the annihilation of it. For these reasons, the Slave Trade may be considered like the fabulous hydra, to have a hundred heads, every one of which it was necessary to cut off before it could be subdued. And as none but Hercules was fitted to conquer the one, so nothing less than extraordinary prudence, courage, labour, and patience, could overcome the other. To protection in this manner by his hundred interests, it was owing, that the monster stalked in security for so long a time. He stalked too in the open day, committing his mighty depredations. And when good men, whose duty it was to mark him as the object of their destruction, began to assail him, he did not fly, but gnashed his teeth at them, growling savagely at the same time, and putting himself into a posture of defiance.

We see then, in whatever light we consider the Slave Trade, whether we examine into the nature of it, or whether we look into the extent of it, or whether we estimate the difficulty of subduing it, we must conclude that no evil more monstrous has ever existed upon earth. But if so, then we have proved the truth of the position, that the abolition of it ought to be accounted by us as one of the greatest blessings, and that it ought to be one of the most copious sources of our joy. Indeed, I do not know, how we can sufficiently express what we ought to feel upon this occasion. It becomes us, as individuals, to rejoice. It becomes us, as a nation, to rejoice. It becomes us even to perpetuate our joy to our posterity. I do not mean, however, by anniversaries, which are to be celebrated by the ringing of bells and convivial meetings, but by handing down this great event so impressively to our children, as to raise in them, if not continual, yet frequently renewed thanksgivings, to the great Creator of the universe, for the manifestation of this his favour, in having disposed our legislators to take away such a portion of suffering from our fellow-creatures, and such a load of guilt from our native land.

And as the contemplation of the removal of this monstrous evil should excite in us the most pleasing and grateful sensations, so the perusal of the history of it should afford us lessons, which it must be useful to us to know or to be reminded of. For it cannot

be otherwise than useful to us to know the means which have been used, and the different persons who have moved in so great a cause. It cannot be otherwise than useful to us to be impressively reminded of the simple axiom which the perusal of this history will particularly suggest to us, that "the greatest works must have a beginning;" because the fostering of such an idea in our minds cannot but encourage us to undertake the removal of evils, however vast they may appear in their size, or however difficult to overcome. It cannot, again, be otherwise than useful to us to be assured, (and this history will assure us of it,) that in any work, which is a work of righteousness, however small the beginning may be, or however small the progress may be that we may make in it, we ought never to despair; for that, whatever checks and discouragements we may meet with, "no virtuous effort is ever ultimately lost." And finally, it cannot be otherwise than useful to us, to form the opinion, which the contemplation of this subject must always produce, namely, that many of the evils which are still left among us, may, by an union of wise and virtuous individuals, be greatly alleviated, if not entirely done away; for if the great evil of the Slave Trade, so deeply entrenched by its hundred interests, has fallen prostrate before the efforts of those who attacked it, what evil of a less magnitude shall not be more easily subdued? O may reflections of this sort always enliven us, always encourage us, always stimulate us to our duty! May we never cease to believe, that many of the miseries of life are still to be remedied, or to rejoice that we may be permitted, if we will only make ourselves worthy by our endeavours, to heal them! May we encourage for this purpose every generous sympathy that arises in our hearts, as the offspring of the Divine influence for our good, convinced that we are not born for ourselves alone, and that the Divinity never so fully dwells in us, as when we do his will, and that we never do his will more agreeably, as far as it has been revealed to us, than when we employ our time in works of charity towards the rest of our fellow-creatures!

CHAPTER II.

As it is desirable to know the true sources of events in history, so this will be realized in that of the abolition of the Slave Trade.—Inquiry as to those who favoured the cause of the Africans previously to the year 1787.—All these to be considered as necessary forerunners in that cause.—First forerunners were Cardinal Ximenes; the Emperor Charles the Fifth; Pope Leo the Tenth; Elizabeth, queen of England; Louis the Thirteenth, of France.

It would be considered by many, who have stood at the mouth of a river, and witnessed its torrent there, to be both an interesting and a pleasing journey to go to the fountain head, and then to travel on its banks downwards, and to mark the different streams in each side, which should run into it and feed it. So I presume the reader will not be a little interested and entertained, in viewing with me the course of the abolition of the Slave Trade, in first finding its source, and then in tracing the different springs which have contributed to its increase. And here I may observe that, in doing this, we shall have advantages, which historians have not always had in developing the causes of things. Many have handed down to us events, for the production of which they have given us but their own conjectures. There has been often, indeed, such a distance between the events themselves, and the lives of those who have recorded them, that the different means and motives belonging to them have been lost through time. On the present occasion, however, we shall have the peculiar satisfaction of knowing, that we communicate the truth, or that those which we unfold, are the true causes and means; for the most remote of all the human springs, which can be traced as having any bearing upon the great event in question, will fall within the period of three centuries, and the most powerful of them within the last twenty years. These circumstances indeed have had their share in inducing me to engage in the present history. Had I measured it by the importance of the subject, I had been deterred; but believing that most readers love the truth, and that

it ought to be the object of all writers to promote it, and believing, moreover, that I was in possession of more facts on this subject than any other person, I thought I was peculiarly called to undertake it.

In tracing the different streams from whence the torrent arose, which has now happily swept away the Slave Trade, I must begin with an inquiry as to those who favoured the cause of the injured Africans, from the year 1516, to the year 1787, at which latter period, a number of persons associated themselves, in England, for its abolition. For though they, who belonged to this association, may, in consequence of having pursued a regular system, be called the principal actors, yet it must be acknowledged, that their efforts would never have been so effectual, if the minds of men had not been prepared by others, who had moved before them. Great events have never taken place without previously disposing causes. So it is in the case before us. Hence they, who lived even in early times, and favoured this great cause, may be said to have been necessary precursors in it. And here it may be proper to observe, that it is by no means necessary that all these should have been themselves actors in the production of this great event. Persons have contributed towards it in different ways :—Some have written expressly on the subject, who have had no opportunity of promoting it by personal exertions. Others have only mentioned it incidentally in their writings. Others, in an elevated rank and station, have cried out publicly concerning it, whose sayings have been recorded. All these, however, may be considered as necessary forerunners in their day; for all of them have brought the subject more or less into notice. They have more or less enlightened the mind upon it; they have more or less impressed it; and therefore each may be said to have had his share in diffusing and keeping up a certain portion of knowledge and feeling concerning it, which has been eminently useful in the promotion of the cause.

It is rather remarkable, that the first forerunners and coadjutors should have been men in power.

So early as in the year 1503, a few slaves had been sent from the Portuguese settlements in Africa into the Spanish colonies

in America. In 1511, Ferdinand the Fifth, king of Spain, permitted them to be carried in great numbers. Ferdinand, however, must have been ignorant in these early times of the piratical manner in which the Portuguese had procured them. He could have known nothing of their treatment when in bondage, nor could he have viewed the few uncertain adventurous transportations of them into his dominions in the western world, in the light of a regular trade. After his death, however, a proposal was made by Bartholomew de las Casas, the bishop of Chiapa, to Cardinal Ximenes, who held the reigns of the government of Spain till Charles the Fifth came to the throne, for the establishment of a regular system of commerce in the persons of the native Africans. The object of Bartholomew de las Casas was undoubtedly to save the American Indians, whose cruel treatment and almost extirpation he had witnessed during his residence among them, and in whose behalf he had undertaken a voyage to the court of Spain. It is difficult to reconcile this proposal with the humane and charitable spirit of the bishop of Chiapa. But it is probable he believed that a code of laws would soon be established in favour both of Africans and of the natives in the Spanish settlements, and that he flattered himself that, being about to return and to live in the country of their slavery, he could look to the execution of it. The cardinal, however, with a foresight, a benevolence, and a justice which will always do honour to his memory, refused the proposal, not only judging it to be unlawful to consign innocent people to slavery at all, but to be very inconsistent to deliver the inhabitants of one country from a state of misery by consigning to it those of another. Ximenes, therefore, may be considered as one of the first great friends of the Africans after the partial beginning of the trade.

This answer of the cardinal, as it showed his virtue as an individual, so was it peculiarly honourable to him as a public man, and ought to operate as a lesson to other statesmen, how they admit any thing new among political regulations and establishments, which is connected in the smallest degree with injustice; for evil, when once sanctioned by governments, spreads in a tenfold degree, and may, unless seasonably checked, become so

ramified as to effect the reputation of a country, and to render its own removal scarcely possible without detriment to the political concerns of the state. In no instance has this been verified more than in the case of the Slave Trade. Never was our national character more tarnished, and our prosperity more clouded by guilt. Never was there a monster more difficult to subdue. Even they, who heard as it were the shrieks of oppression, and wished to assist the sufferers, were fearful of joining in their behalf. While they acknowledged the necessity of removing one evil, they were terrified by the prospect of introducing another; and were, therefore, only able to relieve their feelings by lamenting, in the bitterness of their hearts, that this traffic had ever been begun at all.

After the death of Cardinal Ximenes, the emperor Charles the Fifth, who had come into power, encouraged the Slave Trade. In 1517, he granted a patent to one of his Flemish favourites, containing an exclusive right of importing four thousand Africans into America. But he lived long enough to repent of what he had thus inconsiderately done; for in the year 1542, he made a code of laws for the better protection of the unfortunate Indians in his foreign dominions, and he stopped the progress of African slavery by an order that all slaves in his American islands should be made free. This order was executed by Pedro de la Gasca. Manumission took place as well in Hispaniola as on the Continent; but on the return of Gasca to Spain, and the retirement of Charles into a monastery, slavery was revived.

It is impossible to pass over this instance of the abolition of slavery by Charles, in all his foreign dominions, without some comments. It shows him, first, to have been a friend both to the Indians and the Africans, as a part of the human race; it shows he was ignorant of what he was doing when he gave his sanction to this cruel trade; it shows when legislators give one set of men undue power over another, how quickly they abuse it, or he never would have found himself obliged, in the short space of twenty-five years, to undo that which he had countenanced as a great state measure; and while it confirms the former lesson to statesmen of watching the beginnings or principles of things in

their political movements, it should teach them never to persist in the support of evils, through the false shame of being obliged to confess that they had once given them their sanction, nor to delay the cure of them because, politically speaking, neither this nor that is the proper season; but to do them away instantly, as there can only be one fit or proper time in the eye of religion, namely, on the conviction of their existence.

From the opinions of Cardinal Ximenes and of the emperor Charles the Fifth, I hasten to that which was expressed much about the same time, in a public capacity, by Pope Leo the Tenth. The Dominicans in Spanish America, witnessing the cruel treatment which the slaves underwent there, considered slavery as utterly repugnant to the principles of the gospel, and recommended the abolition of it. The Franciscans did not favour the former in this their scheme of benevolence; and the consequence was, that a controversy on this subject sprung up between them, which was carried to this pope for his decision. Leo exerted himself, much to his honour, in behalf of the poor sufferers, and declared "That not only the Christian religion, but that Nature herself cried out against a state of slavery." This answer was certainly worthy of one who was deemed the head of the Christian Church. It must, however, be confessed that it would have been strange if Leo, in his situation as pontiff, had made a different reply. He could never have denied that God was no respecter of persons. He must have acknowledged that men were bound to love each other as brethren; and, if he admitted the doctrine that all men were accountable for their actions hereafter, he could never have prevented the deduction that it was necessary they should be free. Nor could he, as a man of high attainments, living early in the sixteenth century, have been ignorant of what had taken place in the twelfth; or that, by the latter end of this latter century, christianity had obtained the undisputed honour of having extirpated slavery from the western part of the European world.

From Spain and Italy I come to England. The first importation of slaves from Africa, by our countrymen, was in the reign of Elizabeth, in the year 1562. This great princess seems on

the very commencement of the trade to have questioned its lawfulness. She seems to have entertained a religious scruple concerning it; and, indeed, to have revolted at the very thought of it. She seems to have been aware of the evils to which its continuance might lead, or that, if it were sanctioned, the most unjustifiable means might be made use of to procure the persons of the natives of Africa. And in what light she would have viewed any acts of this kind, had they taken place, we may conjecture from this fact,—that when Captain (afterwards Sir John) Hawkins returned from his first voyage to Africa and Hispaniola, whither he had carried slaves, she sent for him, and, as we learn from HILL's *Naval History* expressed her concern lest any of the Africans should be carried off without their free consent, declaring that "it would be detestable, and call down the vengeance of heaven upon the undertakers." Captain Hawkins promised to comply with the injunctions of Elizabeth in this respect, but he did not keep his word; for when he went to Africa again, he seized many of the inhabitants and carried them off as slaves, which occasioned Hill, in the account he gives of his second voyage, to use these remarkable words:—"Here began the horrid practice of forcing the Africans into slavery, an injustice and barbarity which, so sure as there is vengeance in heaven for the worst of crimes, will some time be the destruction of all who allow or encourage it." That the trade should have been suffered to continue under such a princess, and after such solemn expressions as those which she has been described to have uttered, can be only attributed to the pains taken by those concerned in it to keep her ignorant of the truth.

From England I now pass over to France. Labat, a Roman missionary, in his account of the isles of America, mentions that Louis the Thirteenth was very uneasy when he was about to issue the edict by which all Africans coming into his colonies were to be made slaves, and that this uneasiness continued till he was assured that the introduction of them in this capacity into his foreign dominions was the readiest way of converting them to the principles of the Christian religion.

These, then, were the first forerunners in the great cause of

the abolition of the Slave Trade: nor have their services towards it been of small moment; for, in the first place, they have enabled those who came after them, and who took an active interest in the same cause, to state the great authority of their opinions and of their example. They have enabled them, again, to detail the history connected with these, in consequence of which circumstances have been laid open which it is of great importance to know; for have they not enabled them to state that the African Slave Trade never would have been permitted to exist but for the ignorance of those in authority concerning it—that at its commencement there was a revolting of nature against it—a suspicion, a caution, a fear, both as to its unlawfulness and its effects? Have they not enabled them to state that falsehoods were advanced, and these concealed under the mask of religion, to deceive those who had the power to suppress it? Have they not enabled them to state that this trade began in piracy, and that it was continued upon the principles of force? And, finally, have not they who have been enabled to make these statements, knowing all the circumstances connected with them, found their own zeal increased, and their own courage and perseverance strengthened; and have they not, by the communication of them to others, produced many friends and even labourers in the cause?

CHAPTER III.

Forerunners continued to 1787; divided from this time into four classes.—First class consists principally of persons in Great Britain of various descriptions: Godwyn; Baxter; Tryon; Southern; Primatt; Montesquieu; Hutcheson; Sharp; Ramsay; and a multitude of others, whose names and services follow.

I HAVE hitherto traced the history of the forerunners in this great cause only up to about the year 1640. If I am to pursue my plan, I am to trace it to the year 1787. But in order to show what I intend in a clearer point of view, I shall divide those who have lived within this period, and who will now consist of persons in a less elevated station, into four classes: and I shall give to each class a distinct consideration by itself.

Several of our old English writers, though they have not mentioned the African Slave Trade, or the slavery consequent upon it, in their respective works, have yet given their testimony of condemnation against both. Thus our great Milton:—

> O execrable son, so to aspire,
> Above his brethren, to himself assuming
> Authority usurpt, from God not given;
> He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,
> Dominion absolute; that right we hold
> By his donation; but man over men
> He made not lord, such title to himself
> Reserving, human left from human free.

I might mention Bishop Saunderson and others, who bore a testimony equally strong against the lawfulness of trading in the persons of men, and of holding them in bondage; but as I mean to confine myself to those who have favoured the cause of the Africans specifically, I cannot admit their names into any of the classes which have been announced.

Of those who compose the first class, defined as it has now been, I cannot name any individual who took a part in this cause till between the years 1670 and 1680; for in the year 1640, and for a few years afterwards, the nature of the trade and of the

slavery was but little known, except to a few individuals, who were concerned in them; and it is obvious that these would neither endanger their own interest nor proclaim their own guilt by exposing it. The first, whom I shall mention is Morgan Godwyn, a clergyman of the established church. This pious divine wrote a treatise upon the subject, which he dedicated to the then archbishop of Canterbury. He gave it to the world, at the time mentioned, under the title of "*The Negroes' and Indians' Advocate.*" In this treatise he lays open the situation of these oppressed people, of whose sufferings he had been an eye-witness in the island of Barbados. He calls forth the pity of the reader in an affecting manner, and exposes with a nervous eloquence the brutal sentiments and conduct of their oppressors. This seems to have been the first work undertaken in England expressly in favour of the cause.

The next person, whom I shall mention, is Richard Baxter, the celebrated divine among the nonconformists. In his *Christian Directory*, published about the same time as *The Negroes' and Indians' Advocate*, he gives advice to those masters in foreign plantations, who have negroes and other slaves. In this he protests loudly against this trade. He says expressly that they, who go out as pirates, and take away poor Africans, or people of another land, who never forfeited life or liberty, and make them slaves and sell them, are the worst of robbers, and ought to be considered as the common enemies of mankind; and that they who buy them, and use them as mere beasts for their own convenience, regardless of their spiritual welfare, are fitter to be called demons than christians. He then proposes several queries, which he answers in a clear and forcible manner, showing the great inconsistency of this traffic, and the necessity of treating those then in bondage with tenderness and a due regard to their spiritual concerns.

The *Directory* of Baxter was succeeded by a publication called *Friendly Advice to the Planters:* in three parts. The first of these was, *A brief Treatise of the principal Fruits and Herbs that grow in Barbados, Jamaica, and other Plantations in the West Indies.* The second was, *The Negroes' Complaint, or their*

hard Servitude, and the Cruelties practised upon them by divers of their Masters professing Christianity. And the third was, *A Dialogue between an Ethiopian and a Christian, his Master, in America.* In the last of these, Thomas Tryon, who was the author, inveighs both against the commerce and the slavery of the Africans, and in a striking manner examines each by the touchstone of reason, humanity, justice, and religion.

In the year 1696, Southern brought forward his celebrated tragedy of *Oronooko*, by means of which many became enlightened upon the subject, and interested in it. For this tragedy was not a representation of fictitious circumstances, but of such as had occurred in the colonies, and as had been communicated in a publication by Mrs. Behn.

The person who seems to have noticed the subject next was Dr. Primatt. In his *Dissertation on the Duty of Mercy, and on the Sin of Cruelty to Brute Animals*, he takes occasion to advert to the subject of the African Slave Trade. "It has pleased God," says he, "to cover some men with white skins and others with black; but as there is neither merit nor demerit in complexion, the white man, notwithstanding the barbarity of custom and prejudice, can have no right by virtue of his colour to enslave and tyrannize over the black man. For whether a man be white or black, such he is by God's appointment, and, abstractly considered, is neither a subject for pride, nor an object of contempt.

After Dr. Primatt, we come to Baron Montesquieu. "Slavery," says he, "is not good in itself. It is neither useful to the master nor to the slave; not to the slave, because he can do nothing from virtuous motives; not to the master, because he contracts among his slaves all sorts of bad habits, and accustoms himself to the neglect of all the moral virtues. He becomes haughty, passionate, obdurate, vindictive, voluptuous, and cruel." And with respect to this particular species of slavery, he proceeds to say, "It is impossible to allow the negroes are men, because, if we allow them to be men, it will begin to be believed that we ourselves are not Christians."

Hutcheson, in his *System of Moral Philosophy*, endeavours to show, that he who detains another by force in slavery, can make

no good title to him, and adds, "Strange that in any nation where a sense of liberty prevails, and where the Christian religion is professed, custom and high prospect of gain can so stupify the consciences of men, and all sense of natural justice, that they can hear such computations made about the value of their fellow-men and their liberty, without abhorrence and indignation!"

Foster, in his *Discourses on Natural Religion and Social Virtue*, calls the slavery under our consideration "a criminal and outrageous violation of the natural rights of mankind." I am sorry that I have not room to say all that he says on this subject. Perhaps the following beautiful extracts may suffice:—

"But notwithstanding this, we ourselves, who profess to be Christians, and boast of the peculiar advantages we enjoy by means of an express revelation of our duty from heaven, are in effect these very untaught and rude heathen countries. With all our superior light, we instil into those whom we call savage and barbarous, the most despicable opinion of human nature. We, to the utmost of our power, weaken and dissolve the universal tie that binds and unites mankind. We practise what we should exclaim against as the utmost excess of cruelty and tyranny, if nations of the world, differing in colour and form of government from ourselves, were so possessed of empire as to be able to reduce us to a state of unmerited and brutish servitude. Of consequence, we sacrifice our reason, our humanity, our Christianity, to an unnatural sordid gain. We teach other nations to despise and trample under foot all the obligations of social virtue. We take the most effectual method to prevent the propagation of the Gospel, by representing it as a scheme of power and barbarous oppression, and an enemy to the natural privileges and rights of man."

"Perhaps all that I have now offered may be of very little weight to restrain this enormity, this aggravated iniquity. However, I shall still have the satisfaction of having entered my private protest against a practice which, in my opinion, bids that God, who is the God and Father of the Gentiles unconverted to Christianity, most daring and bold defiance, and spurns at all the principles both of natural and revealed religion."

The next author is Sir Richard Steele, who, by means of the affecting story of Inkle and Yarico, holds up this trade again to our abhorrence.

In the year 1735, Atkins, who was a surgeon in the navy, published his *Voyage to Guinea, Brazil, and the West Indies, in his Majesty's ships Swallow and Weymouth.* In this work he describes openly the manner of making the natives slaves, such as by kidnapping, by unjust accusations and trials, and by other nefarious means. He states also the cruelties practised upon them by the white people, and the iniquitous ways and dealings of the latter, and answers their argument, by which they insinuated that the condition of the Africans was improved by their transportation to other countries.

From this time, the trade beginning to be better known, a multitude of persons of various stations and characters sprung up, who by exposing it, are to be mentioned among the forerunners and coadjutors in the cause.

Pope, in his *Essay on Man*, where he endeavours to show that happiness in the present depends, among other things, upon the hope of a future state, takes an opportunity of exciting compassion in behalf of the poor African, while he censures the avarice and cruelty of his master:—

> Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored mind
> Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
> His soul proud Science never taught to stray
> Far as the solar walk, or milky-way;
> Yet simple Nature to his hope was given
> Behind the cloud-topt hill an humbler heaven;
> Some safer world in depth of woods embraced,
> Some happier island in the watery waste,
> Where slaves once more their native land behold,
> No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.

Thomson also, in his *Seasons*, marks this traffic as destructive and cruel, introducing the well-known fact of sharks following the vessels employed in it:—

> Increasing still the sorrows of those storms,
> His jaws horrific arm'd with three-fold fate,
> Here dwells the direful shark. Lured by the scent
> Of steaming crowds, of rank disease, and death;
> Behold! he rushing cuts the briny flood,

Swift as the gale can bear the ship along,
And from the partners of that cruel trade,
Which spoils unhappy Guinea of her sons,
Demands his share of prey, demands themselves.
The stormy fates descend: one death involves
Tyrants and slaves; when straight their mangled limbs
Crashing at once, he dyes the purple seas
With gore, and riots in the vengeful meal.

Neither was Richard Savage forgetful in his poems of the *Injured Africans:* he warns their oppressors of a day of retribution for their barbarous conduct. Having personified Public Spirit, he makes her speak on the subject in the following manner:—

Let by my specious name no tyrants rise,
And cry, while they enslave, they civilize!
Know, Liberty and I are still the same
Congenial—ever mingling flame with flame!
Why must I Afric's sable children see
Vended for slaves, though born by nature free,
The nameless tortures cruel minds invent
Those to subject whom Nature equal meant?
If these you dare (although unjust success
Empowers you now unpunished, to oppress),
Revolving empire you and yours may doom—
(Rome all subdu'd—yet Vandals vanquish'd Rome)
Yes—Empire may revolt—give them the day,
And yoke may yoke, and blood may blood repay.

Wallis, in his *System of the Laws of Scotland*, maintains, that "neither men nor governments have a right to sell those of their own species. Men and their liberty are neither purchaseable nor saleable." And, after arguing the case, he says, "This is the law of nature, which is obligatory on all men, at all times, and in all places.—Would not any of us, who should be snatched by pirates from his native land, think himself cruelly abused, and at all times entitled to be free? Have not these unfortunate Africans, who meet with the same cruel fate, the same right? Are they not men as well as we? And have they not the same sensibility? Let us not, therefore, defend or support an usage, which is contrary to all the laws of humanity."

In the year 1750, the reverend Griffith Hughes, rector of St. Lucy, in Barbados, published his Natural History of that

island. He took an opportunity, in the course of it, of laying open to the world the miserable situation of the poor Africans, and the waste of them by hard labour and other cruel means, and he had the generosity to vindicate their capacities from the charge, which they who held them in bondage brought against them, as a justification of their own wickedness in continuing to deprive them of the rights of men.

Edmund Burke, in his account of the European settlements, (for this work is usually attributed to him,) complains "that the Negroes in our colonies endure a slavery more complete, and attended with far worse circumstances, than what any people in their condition suffer, in any other part of the world, or have suffered in any other period of time. Proofs of this are not wanting. The prodigious waste, which we experience in this unhappy part of our species, is a full and melancholy evidence of this truth." And he goes on to advise the planters, for the sake of their own interest, to behave like good men, good masters, and good Christians, and to impose less labour upon their slaves, and to give them recreation on some of the grand festivals, and to instruct them in religion, as certain preventives of their decrease.

An anonymous author of a pamphlet, entitled, *An Essay in Vindication of the Continental Colonies of America*, seems to have come forward next. Speaking of slavery there, he says, "It is shocking to humanity, violative of every generous sentiment, abhorrent utterly from the Christian religion.—There cannot be a more dangerous maxim than that necessity is a plea for injustice, for who shall fix the degree of this necessity? What villain so atrocious, who may not urge this excuse, or, as Milton has happily expressed it,

> And with necessity,
> The tyrant's plea, excuse his devilish deed?

"That our colonies," he continues, "want people, is a very weak argument for so inhuman a violation of justice.—Shall a civilized, a Christian nation encourage slavery, because the barbarous, savage, lawless African hath done it? To what end do we profess a religion whose dictates we so flagrantly violate? Wherefore have we that pattern of goodness and humanity, if we

refuse to follow it? How long shall we continue a practice which policy rejects, justice condemns, and piety revolts at?"

The poet Shenstone, who comes next in order, seems to have written an elegy on purpose to stigmatize this trade. Of this elegy I shall copy only the following parts:—

See the poor native quit the Libyan shores,
Ah! not in love's delightful fetters bound!
No radiant smile his dying peace restores,
No love, nor fame, nor friendship, heals his wound.

Let vacant bards display their boasted woes;
Shall I the mockery of grief display?
No; let the muse his piercing pangs disclose,
Who bleeds and weeps his sum of life away!

On the wild heath in mournful guise he stood,
Ere the shrill boatswain gave the hated sign;
He dropt a tear unseen into the flood,
He stole one secret moment to repine—

"Why am I ravish'd from my native strand?
What savage race protects this impious gain?
Shall foreign plagues infest this teeming land,
And more than sea-born monsters plough the main?

Here the dire locusts' horrid swarms prevail;
Here the blue asps with livid poison swell;
Here the dry dipsa writhes his sinuous mail;
Can we not here secure from envy dwell?

When the grim lion urged his cruel chase,
When the stern panther sought his midnight prey,
What fate reserved me for this Christian race?
O race more polished, more severe than they!

Yet shores there are, bless'd shores for us remain,
And favour'd isles, with golden fruitage crown'd,
Where tufted flow'rets paint the verdant plain,
And every breeze shall medicine every wound."

In the year 1755, Dr. Hayter, bishop of Norwich, preached a sermon before the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel*, in which he bore his testimony againgst the continuance of this trade.

Dyer, in his poem called *The Fleece*, expresses his sorrow on account of this barbarous trade, and looks forward to a day

of retributive justice on account of the introduction of such an evil.

In the year 1760, a pamphlet appeared, entitled, *Two Dialogues on the Man-trade*, by John Philmore. This name is supposed to be an assumed one. The author, however, discovers himself to have been both an able and a zealous advocate in favour of the African race.

Malachi Postlethwaite, in his *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, proposes a number of queries on the subject of the Slave Trade. I have not room to insert them at full length, but I shall give the following as the substance of some of them to the reader: "Whether this commerce be not the cause of incessant wars among the Africans—Whether the Africans, if it were abolished, might not become as ingenious, as humane, as industrious, and as capable of arts, manufactures, and trades, as even the bulk of Europeans—Whether, if it were abolished, a much more profitable trade might not be substituted, and this to the very centre of their extended country, instead of the trifling portion which now subsists upon their coasts—And whether the great hindrance to such a new and advantageous commerce has not wholly proceeded from that unjust, inhuman, unchristian-like traffic, called the Slave Trade, which is carried on by the Europeans." The public proposal of these and other queries by a man of so great commercial knowledge as Postlethwaite, and by one who was himself a member of the African Committee, was of great service in exposing the impolicy as well as immorality of the Slave Trade.

In the year 1761, Thomas Jeffery published an account of a part of North America, in which he lays open the miserable state of the slaves in the West Indies, both as to their clothing, their food, their labour, and their punishments. But, without going into particulars, the general account he gives of them is affecting: "It is impossible," he says, "for a human heart to reflect upon the slavery of these dregs of mankind, without in some measure feeling for their misery, which ends but with their lives—nothing can be more wretched than the condition of this people."

Sterne, in his account of the Negro girl in his *Life of Tristram*

Shandy, took decidedly the part of the oppressed Africans. The pathetic, witty, and sentimental manner, in which he handled this subject, occasioned many to remember it, and procured a certain portion of feeling in their favour.

Rousseau contributed not a little in his day to the same end.

Bishop Warburton preached a sermon in the year 1766, before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in which he took up the cause of the miserable Africans, and in which he severely reprobated their oppressors. The language in this sermon is so striking, that I shall make an extract from it. "From the free savages," says he, "I now come to the savages in bonds. By these I mean the vast multitudes yearly stolen from the opposite continent, and sacrificed by the colonists to their great idol, the god of gain. But what then say these sincere worshippers of Mammon? They are our own property which we offer up.—Gracious God! to talk, as of herds of cattle, of property in rational creatures, creatures endued with all our faculties, possessing all our qualities but that of colour, our brethren both by nature and grace, shocks all the feelings of humanity, and the dictates of common sense? But, alas! what is there, in the infinite abuses of society, which does not shock them! Yet nothing is more certain in itself and apparent to all, than that the infamous traffic for slaves directly infringes both divine and human law. Nature created man free, and grace invites him to assert his freedom.

"In excuse of this violation it hath been pretended, that though, indeed, these miserable outcasts of humanity be torn from their homes and native country by fraud and violence, yet they thereby become the happier, and their condition the more eligible. But who are you, who pretend to judge of another man's happiness; that state which each man under the guidance of his Maker forms for himself, and not one man for another? To know what constitutes mine or your happiness is the sole prerogative of him who created us, and cast us in so various and different moulds. Did your slaves ever complain to you of their unhappiness amidst their native woods and deserts? or rather let

me ask, did they ever cease complaining of their condition under you their lordly masters, where they see, indeed, the accommodations of civil life, but see them all pass to others, themselves unbenefited by them? Be so gracious then, ye petty tyrants over human freedom, to let your slaves judge for themselves, what it is which makes their own happiness, and then see whether they do not place it in the return to their own country, rather than in the contemplation of your grandeur, of which their misery makes so large a part; a return so passionately longed for, that, despairing of happiness here, that is, of escaping the chains of their cruel task-masters, they console themselves with feigning it to be the gracious reward of heaven in their future state."

About this time certain cruel and wicked practices, which must now be mentioned, had arrived at such a height, and had become so frequent in the metropolis, as to produce of themselves other coadjutors to the cause.

Before the year 1700, planters, merchants, and others, resident in the West Indies, but coming to England, were accustomed to bring with them certain slaves to act as servants with them during their stay. The latter, seeing the freedom and the happiness of servants in this country, and considering what would be their own hard fate on their return to the islands, frequently absconded. Their masters of course made search after them, and often had them seized and carried away by force. It was, however, thrown out by many on these occasions, that the English laws did not sanction such proceedings, for that all persons who were baptized became free. The consequence of this was, that most of the slaves, who came over with their masters, prevailed upon some pious clergyman to baptize them. They took of course godfathers of such citizens as had the generosity o espouse their cause. When they were seized they usually sent to these, if they had an opportunity, for their protection. And in the result, their godfathers, maintaining that they had been baptized, and that they were free on this account as well as by the general tenour of the law of England, dared those who had taken possession of them to send them out of the kingdom.

The planters, merchants, and others, being thus circum-

stanced, knew not what to do. They were afraid of taking their slaves away by force, and they were equally afraid of bringing any of the cases before a public court. In this dilemma, in 1729, they applied to York and Talbot, the attorney and solicitor-general for the time being, and obtained the following strange opinion from them:—"We are of opinion, that a slave by coming from the West Indies into Great Britain or Ireland, either with or without his master, does not become free, and that his master's right and property in him is not thereby determined or varied, and that baptism doth not bestow freedom on him, nor make any alteration in his temporal condition in these kingdoms. We are also of opinion, that the master may legally compel him to return again to the plantations."

This cruel and illegal opinion was delivered in the year 1729. The planters, merchants, and others, gave it of course all the publicity in their power. And the consequences were as might easily have been apprehended. In a little time slaves absconding were advertised in the London papers as runaways, and rewards offered for the apprehension of them, in the same brutal manner as we find them advertised in the land of slavery. They were advertised also, in the same papers, to be sold by auction, sometimes by themselves, and at others with horses, chaises, and harness? They were seized also by their masters, or by persons employed by them, in the very streets, and dragged from thence to the ships; and so unprotected now were these poor slaves, that persons in nowise concerned with them began to institute a trade in their persons, making agreements with captains of ships going to the West Indies to put them on board at a certain price. This last instance shows how far human nature is capable of going, and is an answer to those persons who have denied that kidnapping in Africa was a source of supplying the Slave Trade. It shows, as all history does from the time of Joseph, that where there is a market for the persons of human beings, all kinds of enormities will be practised to obtain them.

These circumstances then, as I observed before, did not fail of producing new coadjutors in the cause. And first they produced that able and indefatigable advocate, Mr. Granville Sharp. This

gentleman is to be distinguished from those who preceded him by this particular, that, whereas these were only writers, he was both a writer and an actor in the cause. In fact, he was the first labourer in it in England. By the words "actor" and "labourer," I mean that he determined upon a plan of action in behalf of the oppressed Africans, to the accomplishment of which he devoted a considerable portion of his time, talents, and substance. What Mr. Sharp has done to merit the title of coadjutor in this high sense, I shall now explain. The following is a short history of the beginning and of the course of his labours:—

In the year 1765, Mr. David Lisle had brought over from Barbados Jonathan Strong, an African slave, as his servant. He used the latter in a barbarous manner at his lodgings in Wapping, but particularly by beating him over the head with a pistol, which occasioned his head to swell. When the swelling went down, a disorder fell into his eyes, which threatened the loss of them. To this an ague and fever succeeded, and a lameness in both his legs.

Jonathan Strong, having been brought into this deplorable situation, and being therefore wholly useless, was left by his master to go whither he pleased. He applied accordingly to Mr. William Sharp, the surgeon, for his advice, as to one who gave up a portion of his time to the healing of the diseases of the poor. It was here that Mr. Granville Sharp, the brother of the former, saw him. Suffice it to say, that in process of time he was cured. During this time Mr. Granville Sharp, pitying his hard case, supplied him with money, and he afterwards got him a situation in the family of Mr. Brown, an apothecary, to carry out medicines.

In this new situation, when Strong had become healthy and robust in his appearance, his master happened to see him. The latter immediately formed the design of possessing him again. According, when he had found out his residence, he procured John Ross, keeper of the Poultry-counter, and William Miller, an officer under the Lord Mayor, to kidnap him. This was done by sending for him to a public-house in Fenchurch-street, and then seizing him. By these he was conveyed, without any

warrant, to the Poultry-counter, where he was sold by his master, to John Kerr, for thirty pounds.

Strong, in this situation, sent, as was usual, to his godfathers, John London and Stephen Nail, for their protection. They went, but were refused admittance to him. At length he sent for Mr. Granville Sharp: the latter went, but they still refused access to the prisoner. He insisted, however, upon seeing him, and charged the keeper of the prison at his peril to deliver him up, till he had been carried before a magistrate.

Mr. Sharp, immediately upon this, waited upon Sir Robert Kite, the then lord mayor, and entreated him to send for Strong and to hear his case. A day was accordingly appointed. Mr. Sharp attended, and also William M'Bean, a notary public, and David Laird, captain of the ship Thames, which was to have conveyed Strong to Jamaica, in behalf of the purchaser, John Kerr. A long conversation ensued, in which the opinion of York and Talbot was quoted. Mr. Sharp made his observations. Certain lawyers who were present seemed to be staggered at the case, but inclined rather to recommit the prisoner: the lord mayor, however, discharged Strong, as he had been taken up without a warrant.

As soon as this determination was made known, the parties began to move off. Captain Laird, however, who kept close to Strong, laid hold of him before he had quitted the room, and said aloud, "Then I now seize him as my slave." Upon this Mr. Sharp put his hand upon Laird's shoulder, and pronounced these words: "I charge you, in the name of the king, with an assault upon the person of Jonathan Strong, and all these are my witnesses." Laird was greatly intimidated by this charge, made in the presence of the lord mayor and others, and, fearing a prosecution, let his prisoner go, leaving him to be conveyed away by Mr. Sharp.

Mr. Sharp having been greatly affected by this case, and foreseeing how much he might be engaged in others of a similar nature, thought it time that the law of the land should be known upon this subject: he applied, therefore, to Dr. Blackstone, afterwards Judge Blackstone, for his opinion upon it. He was,

however, not satisfied with it when he received it; nor could he obtain any satisfactory answer from several other lawyers, to whom he afterwards applied. The truth is that the opinion of York and Talbot, which had been made public and acted upon by the planters, merchants, and others, was considered of high authority, and scarcely any one dared to question the legality of it. In this situation Mr. Sharp saw no means of help but in his own industry, and he determined immediately to give up two or three years to the study of the English law, that he might the better advocate the cause of these miserable people. The result of these studies was the publication of a book in the year 1769, which he called, *A Representation of the Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery in England.* In this work he refuted, in the clearest manner, the opinion of York and Talbot: he produced against it the opinion of the Lord Chief Justice Holt, who, many years before, had determined that every slave coming into England became free: he attacked and refuted it again by a learned and laborious inquiry into all the principles of Villenage. He refuted it again by showing it to be an axiom in the British constitution, "That every man in England was free to sue for and defend his rights, and that force could not be used without a legal process," leaving it to the judges to determine whether an African was a man. He attacked also the opinion of Judge Blackstone, and showed where his error lay. This valuable book, containing these and other kinds of arguments on the subject, he distributed, but particularly among the lawyers, giving them an opportunity of refuting or acknowledging the doctrines it contained.

While Mr. Sharp was engaged in this work, another case offered, in which he took a part: this was in the year 1768. Hylas, an African slave, prosecuted a person of the name of Newton for having kidnapped his wife, and sent her to the West Indies. The result of the trial was, that damages to the amount of a shilling were given, and the defendant was bound to bring back the woman, either by the first ship, or in six months from this decision of the court.

But soon after the work just mentioned was out, and when

Mr. Sharp was better prepared, a third case occurred: this happened in the year 1770. Robert Stapylton, who lived at Chelsea, in conjunction with John Malony and Edward Armstrong, two watermen, seized the person of Thomas Lewis, an African slave, in a dark night, and dragged him to a boat lying in the Thames; they then gagged him and tied him with a cord, and rowed him down to a ship, and put him on board to be sold as a slave in Jamaica. This base action took place near the garden of Mrs. Banks, the mother of the late Sir Joseph Banks. Lewis, it appears, on being seized, screamed violently. The servants of Mrs. Banks, who heard his cries, ran to his assistance, but the boat was gone. On informing their mistress of what had happened, she sent for Mr. Sharp, who began now to be known as the friend of the helpless Africans, and professed her willingness to incur the expense of bringing the delinquents to justice. Mr. Sharp, with some difficulty, procured a *habeas corpus*, in consequence of which Lewis was brought from Gravesend just as the vessel was on the point of sailing. An action was then commenced against Stapylton, who defended himself on the plea, "That Lewis belonged to him as his slave." In the course of the trial, Mr. Dunning, who was counsel for Lewis, paid Mr. Sharp a handsome compliment; for he held in his hand Mr. Sharp's book, on the *Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery in England*, while he was pleading; and in his address to the jury he spoke and acted thus:—"I shall submit to you," says Mr. Dunning, "what my ideas are upon such evidence, reserving to myself an opportunity of discussing it more particularly, and reserving to myself a right to insist upon a position, which I will maintain (and here he held up the book to the notice of those present,) in any place and in any court of the kingdom, that our laws admit of no such property*." The result of the trial was, that the jury pronounced the plaintiff not to have been the property of the defendant, several of them crying out, "No property, no property."

After this one or two other trials came on, in which the

* It is lamentable to think that the same Mr. Dunning, in a cause of this kind, which came on afterwards, took the opposite side of the question.

oppressor was defeated, and several cases occurred in which poor slaves were liberated from the holds of vessels and other places of confinement, by the exertions of Mr. Sharp. One of these cases was singular. The vessel, on board which a poor African had been dragged and confined, had reached the Downs, and had actually got under weigh for the West Indies: in two or three hours she would have been out of sight; but just at this critical moment the writ of *habeas corpus* was carried on board. The officer who served it on the captain saw the miserable African chained to the mainmast, bathed in tears, and casting a last mournful look on the land of freedom, which was fast receding from his sight. The captain, on receiving the writ, became outrageous; but knowing the serious consequences of resisting the law of the land, he gave up his prisoner, whom the officer carried safe, but now crying for joy, to the shore.

But though the injured Africans, whose causes had been tried, escaped slavery, and though many who had been forcibly carried into dungeons, ready to be transported into the Colonies, had been delivered out of them, Mr. Sharp was not easy in his mind: not one of the cases had yet been pleaded on the broad ground, "Whether an African slave, coming into England, became free?" This great question had been hitherto studiously avoided; it was still, therefore, left in doubt. Mr. Sharp was almost daily acting as if it had been determined, and as if he had been following the known law of the land: he wished, therefore, that the next cause might be argued upon this principle. Lord Mansfield too, who had been biassed by the opinion of York and Talbot, began to waver in consequence of the different pleadings he had heard on this subject: he saw also no end of trials like these, till the law should be ascertained, and he was anxious for a decision on the same basis as Mr. Sharp. In this situation the following case offered, which was agreed upon for the determination of this important question.

James Somerset, an African slave, had been brought to England by his master, Charles Stewart, in November 1769. Somerset in process of time left him. Stewart took an opportunity of seizing him, and had him conveyed on board the Ann

and Mary, Captain Knowles, to be carried out of the kingdom and sold as a slave in Jamaica: the question was, "Whether a slave, by coming into England, became free?"

In order that time might be given for ascertaining the law fully on this head, the case was argued at three different sittings. First, in January, 1772; secondly, in February, 1772; and thirdly, in May, 1772. And that no decision otherwise than what the law warranted might be given, the opinion of the judges was taken upon the pleadings. The great and glorious result of the trial was, "That as soon as ever any slave set his foot upon English territory, he became free."

Thus ended the great case of Somerset, which, having, been determined after so deliberate an investigation of the law, can never be reversed while the British Constitution remains. The eloquence displayed in it by those who were engaged on the side of liberty, was perhaps never exceeded on any occasion; and the names of the counsellors Davy, Glynn, Hargrave, Mansfield, and Alleyne, ought always to be remembered with gratitude by the friends of this great cause. For when we consider in how many crowded courts they pleaded, and the number of individuals in these, whose minds they enlightened, and whose hearts they interested in the subject, they are certainly to be put down as no small instruments in the promotion of it: but chiefly to him, under Divine Providence, are we to give the praise, who became the first great actor in it, who devoted his time, his talents, and his substance to this Christian undertaking, and by whose laborious researches the very pleaders themselves were instructed and benefited. By means of his almost incessant vigilance and attention, and unwearied efforts, the poor African ceased to be hunted in our streets as a beast of prey. Miserable as the roof might be, under which he slept, he slept in security. He walked by the side of the stately ship, and he feared no dungeon in her hold. Nor ought we, as Englishmen, to be less grateful to this distinguished individual than the African ought to be upon this occasion. To him we owe it, that we no longer see our public papers polluted by hateful advertisements of the sale of the human species, or that we are no longer distressed by the perusal of impious

rewards for bringing back the poor and the helpless into slavery, or that we are prohibited the disgusting spectacle of seeing man bought by his fellow-man. To him, in short, we owe this restoration of the beauty of our constitution—this prevention of the continuance of our national disgrace.

I shall say but little more of Mr. Sharp at present, than that he felt it his duty, immediately after the trial, to write to Lord North, then principal minister of state, warning him in the most earnest manner, to abolish immediately both the trade and the slavery of the human species in all the British dominions, as utterly irreconcileable with the principles of the British constitution, and the established religion of the land.

Among other coadjutors, whom the cruel and wicked practices which have now been so amply detailed brought forward, was a worthy clergyman, whose name I have not yet been able to learn. He endeavoured to interest the public feeling in behalf of the injured Africans, by writing an epilogue to the *Padlock*, in which Mungo appeared as a black servant. This epilogue is so appropriate to the case, that I cannot but give it to the reader. Mungo enters, and thus addresses the audience:—

Thank you, my massas! have you laugh your fill?
Then let me speak, nor take that freedom ill.
E'en from *my* tongue some heart-felt truths may fall,
And outraged Nature claims the care of all.
My tale in *any* place would force a tear,
But calls for stronger, deeper feelings here;
For whilst I tread the free-born British land,
Whilst now before me crowded Britons stand,—
Vain, vain that glorious privilege to me,
I am a slave, where all things else are free.

Yet was I born, as you are, no man's slave,
An heir to all that liberal Nature gave;
My mind can reason, and my limbs can move
The same as yours; like yours my heart can love;
Alike my body food and sleep sustain;
And e'en like yours—feels pleasure, want, and pain.
One sun rolls o'er us, common skies surround;
One globe supports us, and one grave must bound.

Why then am I devoid of all to live
That manly comforts to a man can give?

To live—untaught religion's soothing balm,
Or life's choice arts; to live—unknown the calm
Of soft domestic ease; those sweets of life,
The duteous offspring, and th' endearing wife!
To live—to property and rights unknown,
Not e'en the common benefits my own!
No arm to guard me from Oppression's rod,
My will subservient to a tyrant's nod!
No gentle hand, when life is in decay,
To soothe my pains, and charm my cares away;
But helpless left to quit the horrid stage,
Harassed in youth, and desolate in age!

But I was born in Afric's tawny strand,
And you in fair Britannia's fairer land.
Comes freedom, then, from colour?—Blush with shame!
And let strong Nature's crimson mark your blame.
I speak to Britons.—Britons then behold
A man by Britons *snared*, and *seized*, and *sold!*
And yet no British statute damns the deed,
Nor do the more than murderous villains bleed.

O sons of Freedom! equalize your laws,
Be all consistent, plead the negro's cause;
That all the nations in your code may see
The British negro, like the Briton, free.
But, should he supplicate your laws in vain,
To break, for ever, this disgraceful chain,
At least, let gentle usage so abate
The galling terrors of its passing state,
That he may share kind Heaven's all social plan;
For, though no Briton, Mungo is—a man.

I may now add, that few theatrical pieces had a greater run than the *Padlock;* and that this epilogue, which was attached to it soon after it came out, procured a good deal of feeling for the unfortunate sufferers, whose cause it was intended to serve.

Another coadjutor, to whom these cruel and wicked practices gave birth, was Thomas Day, the celebrated author of *Sandford and Merton*, and whose virtues were well known among those who had the happiness of his friendship. In the year 1773 he published a poem, which he wrote expressly in behalf of the oppressed Africans. He gave it the name of *The Dying Negro.* The preface to it was written in an able manner by his friend Counsellor Bicknell, who is therefore to be ranked among the coadjutors in this great cause. The poem was founded on a

simple fact, which had taken place a year or two before. A poor negro had been seized in London, and forcibly put on board a ship, where he destroyed himself, rather than return to the land of slavery. To the poem is affixed a frontispiece, in which the negro is represented. He is made to stand in an attitude of the most earnest address to heaven, in the course of which, with the fatal dagger in his hand, he breaks forth in the following words:

> To you this unpolluted blood I pour,
> To you that spirit, which ye gave, restore.

This poem, which was the first ever written expressly on the subject, was read extensively; and it added to the sympathy in favour of suffering humanity, which was now beginning to show itself in the kingdom.

About this time the first edition of the *Essay on Truth* made its appearance in the world. Dr. Beattie took an opportunity, in this work, of vindicating the intellectual powers of the Africans from the aspersions of Hume, and of condemning their slavery as a barbarous piece of policy, and as inconsistent with the free and generous spirit of the British nation.

In the year 1774, John Wesley, the celebrated divine, to whose pious labours the religious world will be long indebted, undertook the cause of the poor Africans. He had been in America, and had seen and pitied their hard condition. The work which he gave to the world in consequence, was entitled *Thoughts on Slavery*. Mr. Wesley had this great cause much at heart, and frequently recommended it to the support of those who attended his useful ministry.

In the year 1776, the abbé Proyart brought out, at Paris, his *History of Loango*, and other kingdoms in Africa, in which he did ample justice to the moral and intellectual character of the natives there.

The same year produced two new friends in England, in the same cause, but in a line in which no one had yet moved. David Hartley, then a member of parliament for Hull, and the son of Dr. Hartley who wrote the *Essay on Man*, found it impossible any longer to pass over without notice the case of the oppressed

Africans. He had long felt for their wretched condition, and, availing himself of his legislative situation, he made a motion in the House of Commons, "That the Slave Trade was contrary to the laws of God, and the rights of men." In order that he might interest the members as much as possible in his motion, he had previously obtained some of the chains in use in this cruel traffic, and had laid them upon the table of the House of Commons. His motion was seconded by that great patriot and philanthropist, Sir George Saville. But though I am now to state that it failed, I cannot but consider it as a matter of pleasing reflection, that this great subject was first introduced into parliament by those who were worthy of it; by those who had clean hands and an irreproachable character, and to whom no motive of party or faction could be imputed, but only such as must have arisen from a love of justice, a true feeling of humanity, and a proper sense of religion.

About this time two others, men of great talents and learning, promoted the cause of the injured Africans, by the manner in which they introduced them to notice in their respective works.

Dr. Adam Smith, in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, had, so early as the year 1759, held them up in an honourable, and their tyrants in a degrading light. "There is not a Negro from the coast of Africa, who does not, in this respect, possess a degree of magnanimity which the soul of his sordid master is too often scarce capable of conceiving. Fortune never exerted more cruelly her empire over mankind, than when she subjected those nations of heroes to the refuse of the gaols of Europe, to wretches who possess the virtue neither of the countries they came from, nor of those they go to, and whose levity, brutality, and baseness so justly expose them to the contempt of the vanquished." And now, in 1776, in his *Wealth of Nations*, he showed in a forcible manner (for he appealed to the interest of those concerned,) the dearness of African labour, or the impolicy of employing slaves.

Professor Millar, in his *Origin of Ranks*, followed Dr. Smith on the same ground. He explained the impolicy of slavery in general, by its bad effects upon industry, population, and morals.

These effects he attached to the system of agriculture as followed in our islands. He showed, besides, how little pains were taken, or how few contrivances were thought of, to ease the labourers there. He contended that the Africans ought to be better treated, and to be raised to a better condition; and he ridiculed the inconsistency of those who held them in bondage. "It affords," says he, "a curious spectacle to observe that the same people, who talk in a high strain of political liberty, and who consider the privilege of imposing their own taxes as one oft he unalienable rights of mankind, should make no scruple of reducing a great proportion of their fellow-creatures into circumstances by which they are not only deprived of property, but almost of every species of right. Fortune, perhaps, never produced a situation more calculated to ridicule a liberal hypothesis, or to show how little the conduct of men is at the bottom directed by any philosophical principles." It is a great honour to the University of Glasgow, that it should have produced, before any public agitation of this question, three professors*, all of whom bore their public testimony against the continuance of the cruel trade.

From this time, or from about the year 1776, to about the year 1782, I am to put down three other coadjutors, whose labours seem to have come in a right season for the promotion of the cause.

The first of these was Dr. Robertson. In his *History of America* he laid open many facts relative to this subject. He showed himself a warm friend both of the Indians and Africans. He lost no opportunity of condemning that trade, which brought the latter into bondage: "a trade," says he, "which is no less repugnant to the feelings of humanity than to the principles of religion." And in his *Charles the Fifth*, he showed in a manner that was clear, and never to be controverted, that Christianity was the great cause in the twelfth century of extirpating slavery from the west of Europe. By the establishment of this fact, he rendered important services to the oppressed Africans. For if Christianity, when it began to be felt in the heart, dictated the abolition of slavery, it certainly became those who lived in a

* The other was Professor Hutcheson, before mentioned in p. 56.

Christian country, and who professed the Christian religion, to put an end to this cruel trade.

The second was the Abbé RAYNAL. This author gave an account of the laws, government, and religion of Africa, of the produce of it, of the manners of its inhabitants, of the trade in slaves, of the manner of procuring these, with several other particulars relating to the subject. And at the end of his account, fearing lest the good advice he had given for making the condition of the slaves more comfortable should be construed into an approbation of such a traffic, he employed several pages in showing its utter inconsistency with sound policy, justice, reason, humanity, and religion.

"I will not here," says he, "so far debase myself as to enlarge the ignominious list of those writers who devote their abilities to justify by policy what morality condemns. In an age where so many errors are boldly laid open, it would be unpardonable to conceal any truth that is interesting to humanity. If whatever I have hitherto advanced hath seemingly tended only to alleviate the burden of slavery, the reason is, that it was first necessary to give some comfort to those unhappy beings whom we cannot set free, and convince their oppressors that they were cruel, to the prejudice of their real interests. But, in the mean time, till some considerable revolution shall make the evidence of this great truth felt, it may not be improper to pursue this subject further. I shall then first prove that there is no reason of state which can authorize slavery. I shall not be afraid to cite to the tribunal of reason and justice those governments which tolerate this cruelty, or which even are not ashamed to make it the basis of their power."

And a little further on he observes—"Will it be said that he, who wants to make me a slave, does me no injury; but that he only makes use of his rights? Where are those rights? Who hath stamped upon them so sacred a character as to silence mine?"

In the beginning of the next paragraph he speaks thus:—"He who supports the system of slavery is the enemy of the whole human race. He divides it into two societies of legal as-

sassins; the oppressors, and the oppressed. It is the same thing as proclaiming to the world, if you would preserve your life, instantly take away mine, for I want to have yours."

Going on two pages further, we find these words:—"But the Negroes, they say, are a race born for slavery; their dispositions are narrow, treacherous, and wicked; they themselves allow the superiority of our understandings, and almost acknowledge the justice of our authority. Yes; the minds of the Negroes are contracted, because slavery destroys all the springs of the soul. They are wicked, but not equally so with you. They are treacherous, because they are under no obligation to speak truth to their tyrants. They acknowledge the superiority of our understanding, because we have abused their ignorance. They allow the justice of our authority, because we have abused their weakness."

"But these Negroes, it is further urged, were born slaves. Barbarians! will you persuade me that a man can be the property of a sovereign, a son the property of a father, a wife the property of a husband, a domestic the property of a master, a Negro the property of a planter?"

But I have no time to follow this animated author, even by short extracts, through the varied strains of eloquence which he displays upon this occasion. I can only say that his labours entitle him to a high station among the benefactors to the African race.

The third was Dr. PALEY, whose genius, talents, and learning have been so eminently displayed in his writings in the cause of natural and revealed religion. Dr. Paley did not write any essay expressly in favour of the Africans. But in his *Moral Philosophy*, where he treated on slavery, he took an opportunity of condemning, in very severe terms, the continuance of it. In this work he defined what slavery was, and how it might arise consistently with the law of nature; but he made an exception against that which arose from the African trade.

"The Slave Trade," says he, "upon the coast of Africa, is not excused by these principles. When slaves in that country are brought to market, no questions, I believe, are asked about the

origin or justice of the vendor's title. It may be presumed, therefore, that this title is not always, if it be ever, founded in any of the causes above assigned.

" But defect of right in the first purchase is the least crime with which this traffic is chargeable. The natives are excited to war and mutual depredation, for the sake of supplying their contracts, or furnishing the markets with slaves. With this the wickedness begins. The slaves, torn away from their parents, wives, and children, from their friends and companions, from their fields and flocks, from their home and country, are transported to the European settlements in America, with no other accommodation on ship-board than what is provided for brutes. This is the second stage of the cruelty, from which the miserable exiles are delivered, only to be placed, and that for life, in subjection to a dominion and system of laws, the most merciless and tyrannical that ever were tolerated upon the face of the earth: and from all that can be learned by the accounts of people upon the spot, the inordinate authority which the plantation-laws confer upon the slave-holder is exercised, by the English slave-holder especially, with rigour and brutality.

" But necessity is pretended, the name under which every enormity is attempted to be justified; and after all, what is the necessity? It has never been proved that the land could not be cultivated there, as it is here, by hired servants. It it said, that it could not be cultivated with quite the same conveniency and cheapness, as by the labour of slaves; by which means, a pound of sugar, which the planter now sells for sixpence, could not be afforded under sixpence-halfpenny—and this is the necessity!

" The great revolution which has taken place in the western world, may, probably, conduce (and who knows but that it was designed) to accelerate the fall of this abominable tyranny: and now that this contest and the passions which attend it are no more, there may succeed, perhaps, a season for reflecting, whether a legislature, which had so long lent its assistance to the support of an institution replete with human misery, was fit to be trusted with an empire, the most extensive that ever obtained in any age or quarter of the world."

The publication of these sentiments may be supposed to have produced an extensive effect. For *The Moral Philosophy* was adopted early by some of the colleges in our universities into the system of their education. It soon found its way also into most of the private libraries of the kingdom; and it was, besides, generally read and approved. Dr. Paley, therefore, must be considered as having been a considerable coadjutor in interesting the mind of the public in favour of the oppressed Africans.

In the year 1783, we find Mr. Sharp coming again into notice. We find him at this time taking a part in a cause, the knowledge of which, in proportion as it was disseminated, produced an earnest desire among all disinterested persons for the abolition of the Slave Trade.

In this year, certain underwriters desired to be heard against Gregson and others of Liverpool, in the case of the ship Zong, captain Collingwood, alleging that the captain and officers of the said vessel threw overboard one hundred and thirty-two slaves alive into the sea, in order to defraud them, by claiming the value of the said slaves, as if they had been lost in a natural way. In the course of the trial which afterwards came on, it appeared, that the slaves on board the Zong were very sickly; that sixty of them had already died; and several were ill and likely to die, when the captain proposed to James Kelsall, the mate, and others, to throw several of them overboard, stating, "that if they died a natural death, the loss would fall upon the owners of the ship; but that if they were thrown into the sea, it would fall upon the underwriters." He selected, accordingly, one hundred and thirty-two of the most sickly of the slaves. Fifty-four of these were immediately thrown overboard, and forty-two were made to be partakers of their fate on the succeeding day. In the course of three days afterwards the remaining twenty-six were brought upon deck to complete the number of victims. The first sixteen submitted to be thrown into the sea; but the rest, with a noble resolution, would not suffer the officers to touch them, but leaped after their companions and shared their fate.

The plea which was set up in behalf of this atrocious and unparalleled act of wickedness was, that the captain discovered,

when he made the proposal, that he had only two hundred gallons of water on board, and that he had missed his port. It was proved, however, in answer to this, that no one had been put upon short allowance; and that, as if Providence had determined to afford an unequivocal proof of the guilt, a shower of rain fell and continued for three days immediately after the second lot of slaves had been destroyed, by means of which they might have filled many of their vessels * with water, and thus have prevented all necessity for the destruction of the third.

Mr. Sharp was present at this trial, and procured the attendance of a short-hand writer to take down the facts, which should come out in the course of it. These he gave to the public afterwards. He communicated them also, with a copy of the trial, to the Lords of the Admiralty, as the guardians of justice upon the seas, and to the Duke of Portland, as principal minister of state. No notice, however, was taken by any of these, of the information which had been thus sent them.

But though nothing was done by the persons then in power, in consequence of the murder of so many innocent individuals, yet the publication of an account of it by Mr. Sharp, in the newspapers, made such an impression upon others, that new coadjutors rose up. For, soon after this, we find Thomas Day entering the lists again as the champion of the injured Africans. He had lived to see his poem of *The Dying Negro*, which had been published in 1773, make a considerable impression. In 1776, he had written a letter to a friend in America, who was the possessor of slaves, to dissuade him by a number of arguments from holding such property; and now, when the knowledge of the case of the ship Zong was spreading, he published that letter under the title of *Fragment of an Original Letter on the Slavery of the Negroes.*

In this same year, Dr. Porteus, Bishop of Chester, but now Bishop of London, came forward as a new advocate for the natives of Africa. The way in which he rendered them service, was by preaching a sermon in their behalf, before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Of the wide circulation of this

* It appeared that they filled six.

sermon, I shall say something in another place, but much more of the enlightened and pious author of it, who from this time never failed to aid, at every opportunity, the cause which he had so ably undertaken.

In the year 1784, Dr. Gregory produced his *Essays, Historical and Moral.* He took an opportunity of disseminating in these a circumstantial knowledge of the Slave Trade, and an equal abhorrence of it at the same time. He explained the manner of procuring slaves in Africa; the treatment of them on the passage, (in which he mentioned the case of the ship Zong,) and the wicked and cruel treatment of them in the colonies. He recited and refuted also the various arguments adduced in defence of the trade. He showed that it was destructive to our seamen. He produced many weighty arguments also against the slavery itself. He proposed clauses for an Act of Parliament for the abolition of both; showing the good both to England and her colonies from such a measure, and that a trade might be substituted in Africa, in various articles, for that which he proposed to suppress. By means of the diffusion of light like this, both of a moral and political nature, Dr. Gregory is entitled to be ranked among the benefactors to the African race.

In the same year, Gilbert Wakefield preached a sermon at Richmond, in Surrey, where, speaking of the people of this nation, he says, "Have we been as renowned for a liberal communication of our religion and our laws as for the possession of them? Have we navigated and conquered to save, to civilize, and to instruct; or to oppress, to plunder, and to destroy? Let India and Africa give the answer to these questions. The one we have exhausted of her wealth and her inhabitants by violence, by famine, and by every species of tyranny and murder. The children of the other we daily carry from off the land of their nativity, like sheep to the slaughter, to return no more. We tear them from every object of their affection, or, sad alternative, drag them together to the horrors of a mutual servitude! We keep them in the profoundest ignorance. We gall them in a tenfold chain, with an unrelenting spirit of barbarity, inconceivable to all but the spectators of it, unexampled among former

ages and other nations, and unrecorded even in the bloody registers of heathen persecution. Such is the conduct of us enlightened Englishmen, reformed Christians! Thus have we profited by our superior advantages, by the favour of God, by the doctrines and example of a meek and lowly Saviour. Will not the blessings which we have abused loudly testify against us? Will not the blood which we have shed cry from the ground for vengeance upon our sins?".

In the same year, James Ramsay, vicar of Teston in Kent, became also an able, zealous, and indefatigable patron of the African cause. This gentleman had resided nineteen years in the island of St. Christopher, where he had observed the treatment of the slaves, and had studied the laws relating to them. On his return to England, yielding to his own feelings of duty and the solicitations of some amiable friends, he published a work, which he called *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of the African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies*. After having given an account of the relative situation of master and slave in various parts of the world, he explained the low and degrading situation which the Africans held in society in our own islands. He showed that their importance would be increased, and the temporal interest of their masters promoted, by giving them freedom, and by granting them other privileges. He showed the great difficulty of instructing them in the state in which they then were, and such as he himself had experienced, both in his private and public attempts, and such as others had experienced also. He stated the way in which private attempts of this nature might probably be successful. He then answered all objections against their capacities, as drawn from philosophy, form, anatomy, and observation; and vindicated these from his own experience. And lastly, he threw out ideas for the improvement of their condition, by an establishment of a greater number of spiritual pastors among them; by giving them more privileges than they then possessed; and by extending towards them the benefits of a proper police. Mr. Ramsay had no other motive for giving this work to the public, than that of humanity, or a wish to serve this much-injured part of the human species. For

he compiled it at the hazard of forfeiting that friendship, which he had contracted with many during his residence in the islands, and of suffering much in his private property, as well as subjecting himself to the ill-will and persecution of numerous individuals.

The publication of this book by one who professed to have been so long resident in the islands, and to have been an eye-witness of facts, produced, as may easily be supposed, a good deal of conversation, and made a considerable impression, but particularly at this time, when a storm was visibly gathering over the heads of the oppressors of the African race. These circumstances occasioned one or two persons to attempt to answer it, and these answers brought Mr. Ramsay into the first controversy ever entered into on this subject, during which, as is the case in most controversies, the cause of truth was spread.

The works which Mr. Ramsay wrote upon this subject were, the essay just mentioned, in 1784. *An Inquiry, also, into the Effects of the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, in 1784; *A Reply to Personal Invectives and Objections*, in 1785; *A Letter to James Tobin, Esq.*, in 1787; *Objections to the Abolition of the Slave Trade, with Answers;* and *An Examination of Harris's Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave Trade*, in 1788; and *An Address on the proposed Bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, in 1789. In short, from the time when he first took up the cause, he was engaged in it till his death, which was not a little accelerated by his exertions. He lived, however, to see this cause in a train of parliamentary inquiry, and he died satisfied; being convinced, as he often expressed, that the investigation must inevitably lead to the total abolition of the Slave Trade.

In the next year, that is, in the year 1785, another advocate was seen in Monsieur Necker, in his celebrated work on the *French Finances*, which had just been translated into the English language from the original work, in 1784. This virtuous statesman, after having given his estimate of the population and revenue of the French West Indian colonies, proceeds thus:—"The colonies of France contain, as we have seen, near five hundred thousand slaves, and it is from the number of these poor wretches that the inhabitants set a value on their plantations. What a

dreadful prospect! and how profound a subject for reflection! Alas! how little are we both in our morality and our principles! We preach up humanity, and yet go every year to bind in chains twenty thousand natives of Africa! We call the Moors barbarians and ruffians, because they attack the liberty of Europeans at the risk of their own; yet these Europeans go, without danger, and as mere speculators, to purchase slaves by gratifying the avarice of their masters, and excite all those bloody scenes which are the usual preliminaries of this traffic!" He goes on still further in the same strain. He then shows the kind of power which has supported this execrable trade. He throws out the idea of a general compact, by which all the European nations should agree to abolish it; and he indulges the pleasing hope that it may take place even in the present generation.

In the same year we find other coadjutors coming before our view, but these in a line different from that in which any other belonging to this class had yet moved. Mr. George White, a clergyman of the established church, and Mr. John Chubb, suggested to Mr. William Tucket, the mayor of Bridgewater, where they resided, and to others of that town, the propriety of petitioning parliament for the abolition of the Slave Trade. This petition was agreed upon, and, when drawn up, was as follows:—

"The humble petition of the inhabitants of Bridgewater showeth,

"That your petitioners, reflecting with the deepest sensibility on the deplorable condition of that part of the human species, the African Negroes, who, by the most flagitious means, are reduced to slavery and misery in the British colonies, beg leave to address this honourable house in their behalf, and to express a just abhorrence of a system of oppression, which no prospect of private gain, no consideration of public advantage, no plea of political expediency, can sufficiently justify or excuse.

"That, satisfied as your petitioners are that this inhuman system meets with the general execration of mankind, they flatter themselves the day is not far distant when it will be universally abolished. And they most ardently hope to see a British parliament, by the extinction of that sanguinary traffic, extend the

blessings of liberty to millions beyond this realm, hold up to an enlightened world a glorious and merciful example, and stand foremost in the defence of the violated rights of human nature."

This petition was presented by the Honourable Ann Poulet, and Alexander Hood, Esq., (afterwards Lord Bridport,) who were the members for the town of Bridgewater. It was ordered to lie on the table. The answer which these gentlemen gave to their constituents relative to the reception of it in the House of Commons is worthy of notice:—"There did not appear," say they in their common letter, "the least disposition to pay any further attention to it. Every one almost says that the abolition of the Slave Trade must immediately throw the West Indian islands into convulsions, and soon complete their utter ruin. Thus they will not trust Providence for its protection for so pious an undertaking."

In the year 1786, Captain J. S. Smith, of the royal navy, offered himself to the notice of the public in behalf of the African cause. Mr. Ramsay, as I have observed before, had become involved in a controversy in consequence of his support of it. His opponents not only attacked his reputation, but had the effrontery to deny his facts. This circumstance occasioned Captain Smith to come forward. He wrote a letter to his friend Mr. Hill, in which he stated that he had seen those things, while in the West Indies, which Mr. Ramsay had asserted to exist, but which had been so boldly denied. He gave, also, permission to Mr. Hill to publish this letter. Too much praise cannot be bestowed on Captain Smith, for thus standing forth in a noble cause, and in behalf of an injured character.

The last of the necessary forerunners and coadjutors of this class, whom I am to mention, was our much-admired poet, Cowper; and a great coadjutor he was, when we consider what value was put upon his sentiments, and the extraordinary circulation of his works. There are few persons who have not been properly impressed by the following lines:—

> My ear is pain'd,
> My soul is sick with every day's report
> Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.

There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man. The natural bond
Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not colour'd like his own, and having power
To inforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.
Lands intersected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other. Mountains interpos'd,
Make enemies of nations, who had else,
Like kindred drops been mingled into one.
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys;
And, worse than all, and most to be deplored
As human Nature's broadest, foulest blot,—
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
With stripes, that Mercy with a bleeding heart
Weeps, when she sees inflicted on a beast.
Then what is man? And what man, seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush
And hang his head to think himself a man?
I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
No: dear as freedom is,—and in my heart's
Just estimation prized above all price,—
I had much rather be myself the slave,
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
We have no slaves at home—then why abroad?
And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loos'd.
Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free;
They touch our country, and their shackles fall*.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it, then;
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all your empire—that where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

* Expressions used in the great trial, when Mr. Sharp obtained the verdict in favour of Somerset.

CHAPTER IV.

Second class of forerunners and coadjutors, up to May 1787, consists of the Quakers in England.—Of George Fox and others.—Of the body of the Quakers assembled at the yearly meeting in 1727; and at various other times.—Quakers, as a body, petition Parliament; and circulate books on the subject.—Individuals among them become labourers and associate in behalf of the Africans; Dilwyn, Harrison, and others.—This the first association ever formed in England for the purpose.

THE second class of the forerunners and coadjutors in this great cause, up to May 1787, will consist of the Quakers in England.

The first of this class was George Fox, the venerable founder of this benevolent society.

George Fox was contemporary with Richard Baxter, being born not long after him, and dying much about the same time. Like him, he left his testimony against this wicked trade. When he was in the island of Barbados, in the year 1671, he delivered himself to those who attended his religious meetings in the following manner:—

"Consider with yourselves," says he, "if you were in the same condition as the poor Africans are—who came strangers to you, and were sold to you as slaves—I say, if this should be the condition of you or yours, you would think it a hard measure; yea, and very great bondage and cruelty. And, therefore, consider seriously of this; and do you for them and to them, as you would willingly have them, or any others, do unto you, were you in the like slavish condition, and bring them to know the Lord Christ." And in his Journal, speaking of the advice which he gave his friends at Barbados, he says, "I desired also that they would cause their overseers to deal mildly and gently with their negroes, and not to use cruelty towards them, as the manner of some had been, and that after certain years of servitude they should make them free."

William Edmundson, who was a minister of the society, and, indeed, a fellow-traveller with George Fox, had the boldness in

the same island to deliver his sentiments to the governor on the same subject. Having been brought before him and accused of making the Africans Christians, or, in other words, of making them rebel and destroy their owners, he replied, "That it was a good thing to bring them to the knowledge of God and Christ Jesus, and to believe in him who died for them and all men, and that this would keep them from rebelling, or cutting any person's throat; but if they did rebel and cut their throats, as the governor insinuated they would, it would be their own doing, in keeping them in ignorance and under oppression, in giving them liberty to be common with women like brutes, and, on the other hand, in starving them for want of meat and clothes convenient; thus, giving them liberty in that which God restrained, and restraining them in that which was meat and clothing."

I do not find any individual of this society moving in this cause, for some time after the death of George Fox and William Edmundson. The first circumstance of moment which I discover, is a resolution of the whole Society on the subject, at their yearly meeting, held in London in the year 1727. The resolution was contained in the following words:—"It is the sense of this meeting, that the importing of negroes from their native country and relations by Friends is not a commendable nor allowed practice, and is, therefore, censured by this meeting."

In the year 1758, the Quakers thought it their duty, as a body, to pass another resolution upon this subject. At this time the nature of the trade beginning to be better known, we find them more animated upon it, as the following extract will show:—

"We fervently warn all in profession with us, that they carefully avoid being any way concerned in reaping the unrighteous profits, arising from the iniquitous practice of dealing in negro or other slaves; whereby, in the original purchase, one man selleth another, as he doth the beasts that perish, without any better pretension to a property in him than that of superior force; in direct violation of the Gospel rule, which teacheth all to do as they would be done by, and to do good to all; being the revers of that covetous disposition, which furnisheth encouragement to

those poor ignorant people to perpetuate their savage wars, in order to supply the demands of this most unnatural traffic, by which great numbers of mankind, free by nature, are subject to inextricable bondage, and which hath often been observed to fill their possessors with haughtiness, tyranny, luxury, and barbarity, corrupting the minds and debasing the morals of their children, to the unspeakable prejudice of religion and virtue, and the exclusion of that holy spirit of universal love, meekness, and charity, which is the unchangeable nature and the glory of true Christianity. We, therefore, can do no less than, with the greatest earnestness, impress it upon Friends everywhere, that they endeavour to keep their hands clear of this unrighteous gain of oppression."

The Quakers hitherto, as appears by the two resolutions which have been quoted, did nothing more than seriously warn all those in religious profession with them against being concerned in this trade. But in three years afterwards, or at the yearly meeting in 1761, they came to a resolution, as we find by the following extract from their minutes, that any of their members having a concern in it should be disowned:—"This meeting, having reason to apprehend that divers under our name are concerned in the unchristian traffic in negroes, doth recommend it earnestly to the care of Friends everywhere to discourage, as much as in them lies, a practice so repugnant to our Christian profession; and to deal with all such as shall persevere in a conduct so reproachful to Christianity; and to disown them, if they desist not therefrom."

The yearly meeting of 1761, having thus agreed to exclude from membership such as should be found concerned in this trade, that of 1763 endeavoured to draw the cords still tighter, by attaching criminality to those who should aid and abet the trade in any manner. By the minute, which was made on this occasion, I apprehend that no one belonging to the Society could furnish even materials for such voyages. "We renew our exhortation, that Friends everywhere be especially careful to keep their hands clear of giving encouragement in any shape to the Slave Trade, it being evidently destructive of the natural

rights of mankind, who are all ransomed by one Saviour, and visited by one divine light, in order to salvation; a traffic calculated to enrich and aggrandize some upon the misery of others; in its nature abhorrent to every just and tender sentiment, and contrary to the whole tenour of the Gospel."

Some pleasing intelligence having been sent on this subject, by the Society in America to the Society in England, the yearly meeting of 1772 thought it their duty to notice it, and to keep their former resolutions alive by the following minute:—"It appears that the practice of holding negroes in oppressive and unnatural bondage hath been so successfully discouraged by Friends in some of the colonies, as to be considerably lessened. We cannot but approve of these salutary endeavours, and earnestly intreat they may be continued, that through the favour of divine Providence a traffic, so unmerciful and unjust in its nature to a part of our own species made, equally with ourselves, for immortality, may come to be considered by all in its proper light, and be utterly abolished as a reproach to the Christian name."

I must beg leave to stop here for a moment, just to pay the Quakers a due tribute of respect for the proper estimation, in which they have uniformly held the miserable outcasts of society, who have been the subject of these minutes. What a contrast does it afford to the sentiments of many others concerning them! How have we been compelled to prove by a long chain of evidence, that they had the same feelings and capacities as ourselves! How many, professing themselves enlightened, even now view them as of a different species! But in the minutes which have been cited we have seen them uniformly represented, as persons "ransomed by one and the same Saviour," "as visited by one and the same light for salvation," and "as made equally for immortality as others." These practical views of mankind, as they are highly honourable to the members of this Society, so they afford a proof both of the reality and of the consistency of their religion.

But to return:—From this time, there appears to have been a growing desire in this benevolent society to step out of its ordinary course in behalf of this injured people. It had hitherto con-

fined itself to the keeping of its own members unpolluted by any gain from their oppression. But it was now ready to make an appeal to others, and to bear a more public testimony in their favour. Accordingly, in the month of June, 1783, when a bill had been brought into the House of Commons for certain regulations to be made with respect to the African Trade, the society sent the following petition to that branch of the legislature:—

"Your petitioners, met in this their annual assembly, having solemnly considered the state of the enslaved negroes, conceive themselves engaged, in religious duty, to lay the suffering situation of that unhappy people before you, as a subject loudly calling for the humane interposition of the legislature.

"Your petitioners regret that a nation, professing the Christian faith, should so far counteract the principles of humanity and justice, as by the cruel treatment of this oppressed race to fill their minds with prejudices against the mild and beneficent doctrines of the gospel.

"Under the countenance of the laws of this country, many thousand of these our fellow-creatures, entitled to the natural rights of mankind, are held as personal property in cruel bondage; and your petitioners being informed that a Bill for the Regulation of the African Trade is now before the House, containing a clause which restrains the officers of the African Company from exporting negroes, your petitioners, deeply affected with a consideration of the rapine, oppression, and bloodshed, attending this traffic, humbly request that this restriction may be extended to all persons whomsoever, or that the House would grant such other relief in the premises as in its wisdom may seem meet."

This petition was presented by Sir Cecil Wray, who, on introducing it, spoke very respectfully of the society. He declared his hearty approbation of their application, and said he hoped he should see the day when not a slave would remain within the dominions of this realm. Lord North seconded the motion, saying he could have no objection to the petition, and that its object ought to recommend it to every humane breast; that it did credit to the most benevolent society in the world; but that, the session being so far advanced, the subject could not then be taken into

consideration; and he regretted that the Slave Trade, against which the petition was so justly directed, was in a commercial view become necessary to almost every nation of Europe. The petition was then brought up and read, after which it was ordered to lie on the table. This was the first petition (being two years earlier than that from the inhabitants of Bridgewater), which was ever presented to parliament for the abolition of the Slave Trade.

But the society did not stop here; for having at the yearly meeting of 1783 particularly recommended the cause to a standing committee, appointed to act at intervals, called the Meeting for Sufferings, the latter in this same year resolved upon an address to the public, entitled, *The Case of our Fellow-creatures, the oppressed Africans, respectfully recommended to the serious Consideration of the Legislature of Great Britain, by the People called Quakers:* in which they endeavoured, in the most pathetic manner, to make the reader acquainted with the cruel nature of this trade; and they ordered 2000 copies of it to be printed.

In the year 1784 they began the distribution of this case. The first copy was sent to the king through Lord Carmarthen, and the second and the third, through proper officers, to the queen and the Prince of Wales. Others were sent by a deputation of two members of the society to Mr. Pitt, as prime-minister; to the Lord Chancellor Thurlow; to Lord Gower, as president of the council; to Lords Carmarthen and Sidney, as secretaries of state; to Lord Chief-Justice Mansfield; to Lord Howe, as first lord of the Admiralty; and to C. F. Cornwall, Esq., as speaker of the House of Commons. Copies were sent also to every member of both houses of parliament.

The society, in the same year, anxious that the conduct of its members should be consistent with its public profession on this great subject, recommended it to the quarterly and monthly meetings to inquire through their respective districts, whether any, bearing its name, were in any way concerned in the traffic, and to deal with such, and to report the success of their labours in the ensuing year. Orders were also given for the reprinting and circulation of 10,000 other copies of *The Case.*

In the year 1785, the society interested itself again in a

similar manner. For the Meeting for Sufferings, as representing it, recommended to the quarterly meetings to distribute a work, written by Anthony Benezet, in America, called *A Caution to Great Britain and her Colonies, in a short Representation of the calamitous State of the enslaved Negroes in the British Dominions.* This book was accordingly forwarded to them for this purpose. On receiving it, they sent it among several public bodies, the regular and dissenting clergy, justices of the peace, and particularly among the great schools of the kingdom, that the rising youth might acquire a knowledge, and at the same time a detestation, of this cruel traffic. In this latter case, a deputation of the society waited upon the masters, to know if they would allow their scholars to receive it. The schools of Westminster, the Charter-house, St. Paul, Merchant-Taylors, Eton, Winchester, and Harrow, were among those visited. Several academies also were visited for this purpose.

But I must now take my leave of the Quakers as a public body*, and go back to the year 1783, to record an event, which will be found of great importance in the present history, and in which only individuals belonging to the society were concerned. This event seems to have arisen naturally out of existing or past circumstances. For the society, as I have before stated, had sent a petition to parliament in this year, praying for the abolition of the Slave Trade. It had also laid the foundation for a public distribution of the books as just mentioned, with a view of enlightening others on this great subject. The case of the ship Zong, which I have before had occasion to explain, had occurred this same year. A letter also had been presented, much about the same time, by Benjamin West, from Anthony Benezet, before mentioned, to our queen, in behalf of the injured Africans, which she had received graciously. These subjects occupied at this time the attention of many Quaker families, and among others, that of a few individuals, who were in close intimacy with each other. These, when they met together, frequently conversed upon them. They perceived, as facts came out in conversation,

* The Quakers, as a public body, kept the subject alive at their yearly meeting in 1784, 1785, 1787, &c.

that there was a growing knowledge and hatred of the Slave Trade, and that the temper of the times was ripening towards its abolition. Hence a disposition manifested itself among these, to unite as labourers for the furtherance of so desirable an object. An union was at length proposed and approved of, and the following persons (placed in alphabetical order) came together to execute the offices growing out of it:—

William Dillwyn,	Thomas Knowles, M.D.
George Harrison,	John Lloyd,
Samuel Hoare,	Joseph Woods.

The first meeting was held on the seventh of July, 1783.. At this "they assembled to consider what steps they should take for the relief and liberation of the negro slaves in the West Indies, and for the discouragement of the Slave Trade on the coast of Africa."

To promote this object, they conceived it necessary that the public mind should be enlightened respecting it. They had recourse, therefore, to the public papers, and they appointed their members in turn to write in these, and to see that their productions were inserted. They kept regular minutes for this purpose. It was not however known to the world that such an association existed.

It appears that they had several meetings in the course of this year. Before the close of it they had secured a place in the *General Evening Post*, in *Lloyd's Evening Post*, in the Norwich, Bath, York, Bristol, Sherborne, Liverpool, Newcastle, and other provincial papers, for such articles as they chose to send to them. These consisted principally of extracts from such authors, both in prose and verse, as they thought would most enlighten and interest the mind upon the subject of their institution.

In the year 1784 they pursued the same plan; but they began now to print books. The first was from a manuscript composed by Joseph Woods, one of the committee. It was entitled, *Thoughts on the Slavery of the Negroes.* This manuscript was well put together. It was a manly and yet feeling address in behalf of the oppressed Africans. It contained a sober and dispassionate

appeal to the reason of all, without offending the prejudices of any. It was distributed at the expense of the association, and proved to be highly useful to the cause which it was intended to promote.

A communication having been made to the committee, that Dr. Porteus, then Bishop of Chester, had preached a sermon before the society for the propagation of the gospel, in behalf of the injured Africans, (which sermon was noticed in the last chapter,) Samuel Hoare was deputed to obtain permission to publish it. This led him to a correspondence with Mr. Ramsay before mentioned. The latter applied in consequence to the bishop, and obtained his consent. Thus this valuable sermon was also given to the world.

In the year 1785, the association continued their exertions as before; but I have no room to specify them. I may observe, however, that David Barclay, a grandson of the great apologist of that name, assisted at one of their meetings, and (what is singular) that he was in a few years afterwards unexpectedly called to a trial of his principles on this very subject. For he and his brother John became, in consequence of a debt due to them, possessed of a large grazing farm, or pen, in Jamaica, which had thirty-two slaves upon it. Convinced, however, that the retaining of their fellow-creatures in bondage was not only irreconcilable with the principles of Christianity, but subversive of the rights of human nature, they determined upon the emancipation of these. And they* performed this generous office to the satisfaction of their minds, to the honour of their characters, to the benefit of the public, and to the happiness of the slave†. I mention this

* They engaged an agent to embark for Jamaica in 1795 to effect this business, and had the slaves conveyed to Philadelphia, where they were kindly received by the Society for improving the Condition of free Black people. Suitable situations were found for the adults, and the young ones were bound out apprentices to handicraft trades, and to receive school learning.

† James Pemberton, of Philadelphia, made the following observation in a letter to a Friend in England:—"David Barclay's humane views towards the Blacks from Jamaica have been so far realized, that these objects of his concern enjoy their freedom with comfort to themselves, and are respectable in their characters, keeping up a friendly intercourse with each other, and avoiding to intermix with the common Blacks of this city, being sober in their conduct and industrious in their business."

anecdote, not only to gratify myself, by paying a proper respect to those generous persons who sacrificed their interest to principle, but also to show the sincerity of David Barclay, (who is now the only surviving brother,) as he actually put in practice what at one of these meetings he was desirous of recommending to others.

Having now brought up the proceedings of this little association towards the year 1786, I shall take my leave of it, remarking, that it was the first ever formed in England for the promotion of the abolition of the Slave Trade. That Quakers have had this honour is unquestionable. Nor is it extraordinary that they should have taken the lead on this occasion, when we consider how advantageously they have been situated for so doing. For the Slave Trade, as we have not long ago seen, came within the discipline of the society in the year 1727. From thence it continued to be an object of it till 1783. In 1783 the society petitioned parliament, and in 1784 it distributed books to enlighten the public concerning it. Thus we see that every Quaker, born since the year 1727, was nourished as it were in a fixed hatred against it. He was taught, that any concern in it was a crime of the deepest dye. He was taught, that the bearing of his testimony against it was a test of unity with those of the same religious profession. The discipline of the Quakers was therefore a school for bringing them up as advocates for the abolition of this trade. To this it may be added, that the Quakers knew more about the trade and the slavery of the Africans, than any other religious body of men, who had not been in the land of their sufferings. For there had been a correspondence between the society in America and that in England on the subject, the contents of which must have been known to the members of each. American ministers also were frequently crossing the Atlantic on religious missions to England. These, when they travelled through various parts of our island, frequently related to the Quaker families in their way the cruelties they had seen and heard of in their own country. English ministers were also frequently going over to America on the same religious errand. These, on their return, seldom failed to communicate what they had learned or observed, but more particularly relative to the

oppressed Africans, in their travels. The journals also of these, which gave occasional accounts of the sufferings of the slaves, were frequently published. Thus situated in point of knowledge, and brought up moreover from their youth in a detestation of the trade, the Quakers were ready to act whenever a favourable opportunity should present itself.

CHAPTER V.

Third class of forerunners and coadjutors, up to 1787, consists of the Quakers and others in America.—Yearly meeting for Pennsylvania and the Jerseys takes up the subject in 1696; and continue it till 1787.—Other five yearly meetings take similar measures.—Quakers, as individuals, also become labourers; William Burling and others.—Individuals of other religious denominations take up the cause also; Judge Sewell and others.—Union of the Quakers with others in a society for Pennsylvania, in 1774; James Pemberton; Dr. Rush.—Similar union of the Quakers with others for New York and other provinces.

THE next class of the forerunners and coadjutors, up to the year 1787, will consist, first, of the Quakers in America; and then of others, as they were united to these for the same object.

It may be asked, How the Quakers living there should have become forerunners and coadjutors in the great work now under our consideration. I reply, first, that it was an object for many years with these to do away the Slave Trade as it was carried on in their own ports. But this trade was conducted in part, both before and after the independence of America, by our own countrymen. It was, secondly, an object with these to annihilate slavery in America; and this they have been instruments in accomplishing to a considerable extent. But any abolition of slavery within given boundaries must be a blow to the Slave Trade there. The American Quakers, lastly, living in a land where both the commerce and slavery existed, were in the way of obtaining a number of important facts relative to both, which made for their annihilation; and communicating many of these facts to those in England, who espoused the same cause, they became fellow-labourers with these in producing the event in question.

The Quakers in America, it must be owned, did most of them originally as other settlers there with respect to the purchase of slaves. They had lands without a sufficient number of labourers, and families without a sufficient number of servants, for their

work. Africans were poured in to obviate these difficulties, and these were bought promiscuously by all. In these days, indeed, the purchase of them was deemed favourable to both parties, for there was little or no knowledge of the manner in which they had been procured as slaves. There was no charge of inconsistency on this account, as in later times. But though many of the Quakers engaged, without their usual consideration, in purchases of this kind, yet those constitutional principles, which belong to the society, occasioned the members of it in general to treat those whom they purchased with great tenderness, considering them, though of a different colour, as brethren, and as persons for whose spiritual welfare it became them to be concerned; so that slavery, except as to the power legally belonging to it, was in general little more than servitude in their hands.

This treatment, as it was thus mild on the continent of America where the members of this society were the owners of slaves, so it was equally mild in the West India Islands where they had a similar property. In the latter countries, however, where only a few of them lived, it began soon to be productive of serious consequences; for it was so different from that which the rest of the inhabitants considered to be proper, that the latter became alarmed at it. Hence in Barbados an act was passed in 1676, under Governor Atkins, which was entitled, An Act to prevent the people called Quakers from bringing their Negroes into their meetings for worship, though they held these in their own houses. This act was founded on the pretence, that the safety of the island might be endangered, if the slaves were to imbibe the religious principles of their masters. Under this act Ralph Fretwell and Richard Sutton were fined in the different sums of eight hundred and of three hundred pounds, because each of them had suffered a meeting of the Quakers at his own house, at the first of which eighty negroes, and at the second of which thirty of them were present. But this matter was carried still further; for in 1680, Sir Richard Dutton, then governor of the island, issued an order to the Deputy Provost Marshal and others, to prohibit all meetings of this society. In the island of Nevis the same bad spirit mani-

fested itself. So early as in 1661, a law was made there probibiting members of this society from coming on shore. Negroes were put in irons for being present at their meetings, and they themselves were fined also. At length, in 1677, another act was passed, laying a heavy penalty on every master of a vessel who should even bring a Quaker to the island. In Antigua and and Bermudas similar proceedings took place, so that the Quakers were in time expelled from this part of the world. By these means a valuable body of men were lost to the community in these islands, whose example might have been highly useful; and the poor slave, who saw nothing but misery in his temporal prospects, was deprived of the only balm which could have soothed his sorrow—the comfort of religion.

But to return to the continent of America. Though the treatment which the Quakers adopted there towards those Africans who fell into their hands, was so highly commendable, it did not prevent individuals among them from becoming uneasy about holding them in slavery at all. Some of these bore their private testimony against it from the beginning as a wrong practice, and in process of time brought it before the notice of their brethren as a religious body. So early as in the year 1688, some emigrants from Krieshiem in Germany, who had adopted the principles of William Penn, and followed him into Pennsylvania, urged, in the yearly meeting of the society there, the inconsistency of buying, selling, and holding men in slavery, with the principles of the Christian religion.

In the year 1696, the yearly meeting for that province took up the subject as a public concern, and the result was, advice to the members of it to guard against future importations of African slaves, and to be particularly attentive to the treatment of those who were then in their possession.

In the year 1711, the same yearly meeting resumed the important subject, and confirmed and renewed the advice which had been before given.

From this time it continued to keep the subject alive; but finding at length, that though individuals refused to purchase slaves, yet others continued the custom, and in greater numbers

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than it was apprehended would have been the case after the public declarations which had been made, it determined, in the year 1754, upon a fuller and more serious publication of its sentiments; and therefore it issued, in the same year, the following pertinent letter to all the members within its jurisdiction:—

"Dear Friends,

"It hath frequently been the concern of our yearly meeting to testify their uneasiness and disunity with the importation and purchasing of negroes and other slaves, and to direct the overseers of the several meetings to advise and deal with such as engage therein. And it hath likewise been the continual care of many weighty friends to press those who bear our name, to guard, as much as possible, against being in any respect concerned in promoting the bondage of such unhappy people. Yet, as we have with sorrow to observe, that their number is of late increased among us, we have thought it proper to make our advice and judgment more public, that none may plead ignorance of our principles therein; and also again earnestly to exhort all to avoid, in any manner, encouraging that practice of making slaves of our fellow-creatures.

"Now, dear friends, if we continually bear in mind the royal law of doing to others as we would be done by, we should never think of bereaving our fellow-creatures of that valuable blessing—liberty, nor endure to grow rich by their bondage. To live in ease and plenty by the toil of those whom violence and cruelty have put in our power, is neither consistent with Christianity nor common justice; and, we have good reason to believe, draws down the displeasure of Heaven; it being a melancholy but true reflection, that, where slave-keeping prevails, pure religion and sobriety decline, as it evidently tends to harden the heart, and render the soul less susceptible of that holy spirit of love, meekness and charity, which is the peculiar characteristic of a true Christian.

"How then can we, who have been concerned to publish the Gospel of universal love and peace among mankind, be so inconsistent with ourselves, as to purchase such as are prisoners of war,

and thereby encourage this anti-Christian practice; and more especially as many of these poor creatures are stolen away, parents from children, and children from parents; and others, who were in good circumstances in their native country, inhumanly torn from what they esteemed a happy situation, and compelled to toil in a state of slavery, too often extremely cruel! What dreadful scenes of murder and cruelty those barbarous ravages must occasion in these nnhappy people's country are too obvious to mention. Let us make their case our own, and consider what we should think, and how we should feel, were we in their circumstances. Remember our blessed Redeemer's positive command—to do unto others as we would have them do unto us;—and that with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again. And we intreat you to examine, whether the purchasing of a negro, either born here or imported, doth not contribute to a further importation, and, consequently, to the upholding of all the evils above mentioned, and to the promoting of man-stealing, the only theft which by the Mosaic law was punished with death;—'He that stealeth a man and selleth him; or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.'

"The characteristic and badge of a true Christian is love and good works. Our Saviour's whole life on earth was one continual exercise of them: 'Love one another,' says he, 'as I have loved you.' But how can we be said to love our brethren who bring, or, for selfish ends, keep them in bondage? Do we act consistently with this noble principle, who lay such heavy burdens on our fellow-creatures? Do we consider that they are called, and do we sincerely desire that they may become heirs with us in glory, and that they may rejoice in the liberty of the sons of God, whilst we are withholding from them the common liberties of mankind? Or can the Spirit of God, by which we have always professed to be led, be the author of those oppressive and unrighteous measures? Or do we not thereby manifest, that temporal interest hath more influence on our conduct herein, than the dictates of that merciful, holy, and unerring Guide?

"And we, likewise, earnestly recommend to all who have slaves, to be careful to come up in the performance of their duty

towards them, and to be particularly watchful over their own hearts, it being, by sorrowful experience, remarkable that custom and a familiarity with evil of any kind, have a tendency to bias the judgment and to deprave the mind; and it is obvious, that the future welfare of these poor slaves, who are now in bondage, is generally too much disregarded by those who keep them. If their daily task of labour be but fulfilled, little else, perhaps, is thought of: nay, even that which in others would be looked upon with horror and detestation, is little regarded in them by their masters; such as the frequent separation of husbands from wives, and wives from husbands, whereby they are tempted to break their marriage covenants, and live in adultery, in direct opposition to the laws of God and men, although we believe that Christ died for all men without respect of persons. How fearful then ought we to be of engaging in what hath so natural a tendency to lesson our humanity, and of suffering ourselves to be inured to the exercise of hard and cruel measures, lest thereby, in any degree, we lose our tender and feeling sense of the miseries of our fellow-creatures, and become worse than those who have not believed.

"And, dear friends, you, who by inheritance have slaves born in your families, we beseech you to consider them as souls committed to your trust, whom the Lord will require at your hand, and who, as well as you, are made partakers of the Spirit of grace, and called to be heirs of salvation. And let it be your constant care to watch over them for good, instructing them in the fear of God and the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ, that they may answer the end of their creation, and that God may be glorified and honoured by them, as well as by us. And so train them up, that if you should come to behold their unhappy situation, in the same light that many worthy men who are at rest have done, and many of your brethren now do, and should think it your duty to set them free, they may be the more capable of making proper use of their liberty.

"Finally, brethren, we intreat you, in the bowels of Gospel-love, seriously to weigh the cause of detaining them in bondage. If it be for your own private gain, or any other motive than their

good, it is much to be feared that the love of God, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, are not the prevailing principles in you, and that your hearts are not sufficiently redeemed from the world, which, that you with ourselves may more and more come to witness, through the cleansing virtue of the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, is our earnest desire. With the salutation of our love we are your friends and brethren:—

"*Signed, in behalf of the yearly meeting, by*

"John Evans,	Abraham Farringdon,
John Smith,	Joseph Noble,
Thomas Carleton,	James Daniel,
William Trimble,	Joseph Gibson,
John Scarborough,	John Shotwell,
Joseph Hampton,	Joseph Parker."

This truly Christian letter, which was written in the year 1754, was designed, as we collect from the contents of it, to make the sentiments of the society better known and attended to on the subject of the Slave Trade. It contains, as we see, exhortations to all the members within the yearly meeting of Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, to desist from purchasing and importing slaves, and, where they possessed them, to have a tender consideration of their condition. But that the first part of the subject of this exhortation might be enforced, the yearly meeting for the same provinces came to a resolution in 1755, That if any of the members belonging to it bought or imported slaves, the overseers were to inform their respective monthly meetings of it, that "these might treat with them, as they might be directed in the wisdom of truth."

In the year 1774, we find the same yearly meeting legislating again on the same subject. By the preceding resolution they who became offenders, were subjected only to exclusion from the meetings for discipline, and from the privilege of contributing to the pecuniary occasions of the Society; but, by the resolution of the present year, all members concerned in importing, selling, purchasing, giving, or transferring negro or other slaves, or other-

wise acting in such manner as to continue them in slavery beyond the term limited by law* or custom, were directed to be excluded from membership or disowned. At this meeting also all the members of it were cautioned and advised against acting as executors or administrators to estates, where slaves were bequeathed, or likely to be detained in bondage.

In the year 1776, the same yearly meeting carried the matter still further. It was enacted, That the owners of slaves, who refused to execute proper instruments for giving them their freedom, were to be disowned likewise.

In 1778 it was enacted by the same meeting, That the children of those who had been set free by members, should be tenderly advised, and have a suitable education given them.

It is not necessary to proceed further on this subject. It may be sufficient to say, that from this time the minutes of the yearly meeting for Pennsylvania and the Jerseys exhibit proofs of an almost incessant attention, year after year†, to the means not only of wiping away the stain of slavery from their religious community, but of promoting the happiness of those restored to freedom, and of their posterity also; and as the yearly meeting of Pennsylvania and the Jerseys set this bright example, so those of New England, New York, Maryland, Virginia, and of the Carolinas and Georgia, in process of time followed it.

But, whilst the Quakers were making these exertions at their different yearly meetings in America, as a religious body, to get rid both of the commerce and slavery of their fellow-creatures, others, in the same profession, were acting as individuals, (that is, on their own grounds, and independently of any influence from their religious communion,) in the same cause, whose labours it will now be proper, in a separate narrative, to detail.

The first person of this description in the Society, was William Burling, of Long Island. He had conceived an abhorrence of slavery from early youth. In process of time he began

* This alludes to the term of servitude for white persons in these provinces.

† Thus in 1779—1782, 1784—1786. The members also of this meeting petitioned their own legislature on this subject, both in 1783 and in 1786.

to bear his testimony against it, by representing the unlawfulness of it to those of his own Society, when assembled at one of their yearly meetings. This expression of his public testimony, he continued annually on the same occasion. He wrote also several Tracts with the same design, one of which, published in the year 1718, he addressed to the elders of his own church, on the inconsistency of compelling people and their posterity to serve them continually and arbitrarily, and without any proper recompense for their services.

The next was Ralph Sandiford, a merchant in Philadelphia. This worthy person had many offers of pecuniary assistance, which would have advanced him in life, but he declined them all because they came from persons who had acquired their independence by the oppression of their slaves. He was very earnest in endeavouring to prevail upon his friends, both in and out of the society, to liberate those whom they held in bondage. At length he determined upon a work called the *Mystery of Iniquity*, in a brief examination of the practice of the times. This he published in the year 1729, though the chief judge had threatened him if he should give it to the world, and he circulated it free of expense wherever he believed it would be useful. The above work was excellent as a composition; the language of it was correct; the style manly and energetic; and it abounded with facts, sentiments, and quotations, which, while they showed the virtue and talents of the author, rendered it a valuable appeal in behalf of the African cause.

The next public advocate was Benjamin Lay *, who lived at Abington, at the distance of twelve or fourteen miles from Philadelphia. Benjamin Lay was known, when in England, to the royal family of that day, into whose private presence he was admitted. On his return to America, he took an active part in behalf of the oppressed Africans. In the year 1737, he published a *Treatise on Slave-keeping*. This he gave away among his

* Benjamin Lay attended the meetings for worship, or associated himself with the religious society of the Quakers. His wife, too, was an approved minister of the Gospel in that society; but I believe he was not long an acknowledged member of it himself.

neighbours and others, but more particularly among the rising youth, many of whom he visited in their respective schools. He applied also to several of the governors for interviews, with whom he held conferences on the subject. Benjamin Lay was a man of strong understanding and of great integrity, but of warm and irritable feelings, and more particularly so when he was called forth on any occasion in which the oppressed Africans were concerned; for he had lived in the island of Barbados, and he had witnessed there scenes of cruelty towards them which had greatly disturbed his mind, and which unhinged it, as it were, whenever the subject of their sufferings was brought before him. Hence, if others did not think precisely as he did, when he conversed with them on the subject, he was apt to go out of due bounds. In bearing what he believed to be his testimony against this system of oppression, he adopted sometimes a singularity of manner, by which, as conveying demonstration of a certain eccentricity of character, he diminished in some degree his usefulness to the cause which he had undertaken; as far, indeed, as this eccentricity might have the effect of preventing others from joining him in his pursuit, lest they should be thought singular also, so far it must be allowed that he ceased to become beneficial. But there can be no question, on the other hand, that his warm and enthusiastic manners awakened the attention of many to the cause, and gave them first impressions concerning it, which they never afterwards forgot, and which rendered them useful to it in the subsequent part of their lives.

The person who laboured next in the society, in behalf of the oppressed Africans, was John Woolman.

John Woolman was born at Northampton, in the county of Burlington and province of Western New Jersey, in the year 1720. In his very early youth he attended, in an extraordinary manner, to the religious impressions which he perceived upon his mind, and began to have an earnest solicitude about treading in the right path. "From what I had read and heard," says he, in his Journal *, "I believed there had been in past ages, people

* This short sketch of the life and labours of John Woolman, is made up from his Journal.

who walked in uprightness before God in a degree exceeding any, that I knew or heard of, now living. And the apprehension of there being less steadiness and firmness among people of this age, than in past ages, often troubled me while I was a child." An anxious desire to do away, as far as himself was concerned, this merited reproach, operated as one among other causes to induce him to be particularly watchful over his thoughts and actions, and to endeavour to attain that purity of heart, without which he conceived there could be no perfection of the Christian character. Accordingly, in the twenty-second year of his age, he had given such proof of the integrity of his life, and of his religious qualifications, that he became an acknowledged minister of the Gospel in his own society.

At a time prior to his entering upon the ministry, being in low circumstances, he agreed for wages to "attend shop for a person at Mount Holly, and to keep his books." In this situation we discover, by an occurrence that happened, that he had thought seriously on the subject, and that he had conceived proper views of the Christian unlawfulness of slavery. "My employer," says he, "having a Negro woman, sold her, and desired me to write a bill of sale, the man being waiting who bought her. The thing was sudden, and though the thought of writing an instrument of slavery for one of my fellow-creatures made me feel uneasy, yet I remembered I was hired by the year, that it was my master who directed me to do it, and that it was an elderly man, a member of our society, who bought her. So through weakness I gave way and wrote, but, at executing it, I was so afflicted in my mind, that I said before my master and the friend, that I believed slave-keeping to be a practice inconsistent with the Christian religion. This in some degree abated my uneasiness; yet, as often as I reflected seriously upon it, I thought I should have been clearer, if I had desired to have been excused from it, as a thing against my conscience; for such it was. And some time after this, a young man of our society spoke to me to write a conveyance of a slave to him, he having lately taken a Negro into his house. I told him I was not easy to write it; for though many of our meeting, and in other places,

kept slaves, I still believed the practice was not right, and desired to be excused from the writing. I spoke to him in good-will; and he told me that keeping slaves was not altogether agreeable to his mind, but that the slave being a gift to his wife he had accepted of her."

We may easily conceive that a person so scrupulous and tender on this subject, (as indeed John Woolman was on all others,) was in the way of becoming in time more eminently serviceable to his oppressed fellow-creatures. We have seen already the good seed sown in his heart, and it seems to have wanted only providential seasons and occurrences to be brought into productive fruit. Accordingly we find that a journey, which he took as a minister of the Gospel in 1746, through the provinces of Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, which were then more noted than others for the number of slaves in them, contributed to prepare him as an instrument for the advancement of this great cause. The following are his own observations upon this journey:—"Two things were remarkable to me in this journey; first, in regard to my entertainment. When I ate, drank, and lodged free-cost, with people who lived in ease on the hard labour of their slaves, I felt uneasy; and, as my mind was inward to the Lord, I found, from place to place, this uneasiness return upon me at times through the whole visit. Where the masters bore a good share of the burden, and lived frugally, so that their servants were well provided for, and their labour moderate, I felt more easy; but where they lived in a costly way, and laid heavy burdens on their slaves, my exercise was often great, and I frequently had conversations with them in private concerning it. Secondly, this trade of importing slaves from their native country being much encouraged among them, and the white people and their children so generally living without much labour, was frequently the subject of my serious thoughts: and I saw in these southern provinces so many vices and corruptions, increased by this trade and this way of life, that it appeared to me as a gloom over the land."

From the year 1747 to the year 1753, he seems to have been occupied chiefly as a minister of religion, but in the latter year

he published a work upon slave-keeping; and in the same year, while travelling within the compass of his own monthly meeting, a circumstance happened which kept alive his attention to the same subject. "About this time," says he, "a person at some distance lying sick, his brother came to me to write his will. I knew he had slaves, and, asking his brother, was told, he intended to leave them as slaves to his children. As writing was a profitable employ, and as offending sober people was disagreeable to my inclination, I was straitened in my mind, but as I looked to the Lord he inclined my heart to his testimony; and I told the man, that I believed the practice of continuing slavery to this people was not right, and that I had a scruple in my mind against doing writings of that kind; that, though many in our society kept them as slaves, still I was not easy to be concerned in it, and desired to be excused from going to write the will. I spoke to him in the fear of the Lord; and he made no reply to what I said, but went away: he also had some concerns in the practice, and I thought he was displeased with me. In this case I had a fresh confirmation, that acting contrary to present outward interest from a motive of Divine love, and in regard to truth and righteousness, opens the way to a treasure better than silver, and to a friendship exceeding the friendship of men."

From 1753 to 1755, two circumstances of a similar kind took place, which contributed greatly to strengthen him in the path he had taken; for in both these cases the persons who requested him to make their wills were so impressed by the principle upon which he refused them, and by his manner of doing it, that they bequeathed liberty to their slaves.

In the year 1756, he made a religious visit to several of the society in Long Island. Here it was that the seed, now long fostered by the genial influences of Heaven, began to burst forth into fruit. Till this time he seems to have been a passive instrument, attending only to such circumstances as came in his way on this subject. But now he became an active one, looking out for circumstances for the exercise of his labours. "My mind," says he, "was deeply engaged in this visit, both in public and private; and at several places, observing that members

kept slaves, I found myself under a necessity, in a friendly way, to labour with them on that subject, expressing, as the way opened, the inconsistency of that practice with the purity of the Christian religion, and the ill effects of it as manifested amongst us.

In the year 1757, he felt his mind so deeply interested on the same subject, that he resolved to travel over Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, in order to try to convince persons, principally in his own society, of the inconsistency of holding slaves. He joined his brother with him in this arduous service. Having passed the Susquehanna into Maryland, he began to experience great agitation of mind. "Soon after I entered this province," says he, "a deep and painful exercise came upon me, which I often had some feeling of since my mind was drawn towards these parts, and with which I had acquainted my brother, before we agreed to join as companions.

"As the people in this and the southern provinces live much on the labour of slaves, many of whom are used hardly, my concern was that I might attend with singleness of heart to the voice of the true Shepherd, and be so supported, as to remain unmoved at the faces of men."

It is impossible for me to follow him in detail, through this long and interesting journey, when I consider the bounds I have prescribed to myself in this work. I shall say, therefore, what I propose to offer generally, and in a few words.

It appears that he conversed with persons occasionally, who were not of his own society, with a view of answering their arguments, and of endeavouring to evince the wickedness and impolicy of slavery. In discoursing with these, however strenuous he might appear, he seems never to have departed from a calm, modest, and yet dignified and even friendly demeanour. At the public meetings for discipline, held by his own society in these provinces, he endeavoured to display the same truths, and in the same manner, but particularly to the elders of his own society, exhorting them, as the most conspicuous rank, to be careful of their conduct, and to give a bright example in the liberation of their slaves. He visited, also, families for the same purpose: and

he had the well-earned satisfaction of finding his admonitions kindly received by some, and of seeing a disposition in others to follow the advice he had given them.

In the year 1758, he attended the yearly meeting at Philadelphia, where he addressed his brethren on the propriety of dealing with such members as should hereafter purchase slaves. On the discussion of this point he spoke a second time, and this to such effect that he had the satisfaction at this meeting to see minutes made more fully than any before, and a committee appointed for the advancement of the great object, to which he had now been instrumental in turning the attention of many, and to witness a considerable spreading of the cause. In the same year, also, he joined himself with two others of the society to visit such members of it as possessed slaves in Chester county. In this journey he describes himself to have met with several who were pleased with his visit, but to have found difficulties with others, towards whom, however, he felt a sympathy and tenderness, on account of their being entangled by the spirit of the world.

In the year 1759, he visited several of the society who held slaves in Philadelphia. In about three months afterwards, he travelled there again, in company with John Churchman, to see others under similar circumstances. He then went to different places on the same errand. In this last journey he went alone. After this he joined himself to John Churchman again, but he confined his labours to his own province. Here he had the pleasure of finding that the work prospered. Soon after this he took Samuel Eastburne as a coadjutor, and pleaded the cause of the poor Africans with many of the society in Bucks county, who held them in bondage there.

In the year 1760, he travelled, in company with his friend Samuel Eastburne, to Rhode Island, to promote the same object. This island had been long noted for its trade to Africa for slaves. He found at Newport, the great sea-port town belonging to it, that a number of them had been lately imported. He felt his mind deeply impressed on this account. He was almost over-

opwered in consequence of it, and became ill. He thought once of promoting a petition to the legislature, to discourage all such importations in future. He then thought of going and speaking to the House of Assembly, which was then sitting; but he was discouraged from both these proceedings. He held, however, a conference with many of his own society in the meeting-house chamber, where the subject of his visit was discussed on both sides, with a calm and peaceable spirit. Many of those present manifested the concern they felt at their former practices, and others a desire of taking suitable care of their slaves at their decease. From Newport he proceeded to Nantucket; but observing the members of the society there to have few or no slaves, he exhorted them to persevere in abstaining from the use of them, and returned home.

In the year 1761, he visited several families in Pennsylvania, and, in about three months afterwards, others about Shrewsbury and Squan in New Jersey. On his return he added a second part to the treatise before published on the keeping of slaves, a care which had been growing upon him for some years.

In the year 1762, he printed, published, and distributed this treatise.

In 1767, he went on foot to the western shores of the same province on a religious visit. After having crossed the Susquehanna, his old feelings returned to him; for coming amongst people living in outward ease and greatness, chiefly on the labour of slaves, his heart was much affected, and he waited with humble resignation to learn how he should further perform his duty to this injured people. The travelling on foot, though it was agreeable to the state of his mind, he describes to have been wearisome to his body. He felt himself weakly at times, in consequence of it, but yet continued to travel on. At one of the quarterly meetings of the society, being in great sorrow and heaviness, and under deep exercise on account of the miseries of the poor Africans, he expressed himself freely to those present, who held them in bondage. He expatiated on the tenderness and loving-kindness of the apostles, as manifested in labours, perils, and sufferings, towards

the poor Gentiles, and contrasted their treatment of the Gentiles with it, whom he described in the persons of their slaves; and was much satisfied with the result of his discourse.

From this time we collect little more from his journal concerning him, than that, in 1772, he embarked for England on a religious visit. After his arrival there, he travelled through many counties, preaching in different meetings of the society, till he came to the city of York. But even here, though he was far removed from the sight of those whose interests he had so warmly espoused, he was not forgetful of their wretched condition. At the quarterly meeting for that county, he brought their case before those present in an affecting manner. He exhorted these to befriend their cause. He remarked that as they, the society, when under outward sufferings, had often found a concern to lay them before the legislature, and thereby, in the Lord's time, had obtained relief; so he recommended this oppressed part of the creation to their notice, that they might, as the way opened, represent their sufferings as individuals, if not as a religious society, to those in authority in this land. This was the last opportunity that he had of interesting himself in behalf of this injured people; for soon afterwards he was seized with the small-pox at the house of a friend in the city of York, where he died.

The next person belonging to the society of the Quakers, who laboured in behalf of the oppressed Africans, was Anthony Benezet. He was born before, and he lived after, John Woolman; of course he was cotemporary with him. I place him after John Woolman, because he was not so much known as a labourer, till two or three years after the other had begun to move in the same cause.

Anthony Benezet was born at St. Quintin, in Picardy, of a respectable family, in the year 1713. His father was one of the many Protestants who, in consequence of the persecutions which followed the revocation of the edict of Nantz, sought an asylum in foreign countries. After a short stay in Holland, he settled, with his wife and children, in London, in 1715.

Anthony Benezet, having received from his father a liberal education, served an apprenticeship in an eminent mercantile

house in London. . In 1731, however, he removed with his family to Philadelphia, where he joined in profession with the Quakers. His three brothers then engaged in trade, and made considerable pecuniary acquisitions in it. He himself might have partaken both of their concerns and of their prosperity; but he did not feel himself at liberty to embark in their undertakings. He considered the accumulation of wealth as of no importance, when compared with the enjoyment of doing good; and he chose the humble situation of a schoolmaster, as according best with this notion, believing, that by endeavouring to train up youth in knowledge and virtue, he should become more extensively useful than in any other way to his fellow-creatures.

He had not been long in his new situation, before he manifested such an uprightness of conduct, such a courtesy of manners, such a purity of intention, and such a spirit of benevolence, that he attracted the notice, and gained the good opinion, of the inhabitants among whom he lived. He had ready access to them, in consequence, upon all occasions; and, if there were any whom he failed to influence at any of these times, he never went away without the possession of their respect.

In the year 1756, when a considerable number of French families were removed from Acadia into Pennsylvania, on account of some political suspicions, he felt deeply interested about them. In a country where few understood their language, they were wretched and helpless; but Anthony Benezet endeavoured to soften the rigour of their situation, by his kind attention towards them. He exerted himself, also, in their behalf, by procuring many contributions for them, which, by the consent of his fellow-citizens, were intrusted to his care.

As the principle of benevolence, when duly cultivated, brings forth fresh shoots, and becomes enlarged, so we find this amiable person extending the sphere of his usefulness by becoming an advocate for the oppressed African race. For this service he seems to have been peculiarly qualified. Indeed, as in all great works, a variety of talents is necessary to bring them to perfection, so Providence seems to prepare different men as instruments, with dispositions and qualifications so various, that each, in pur-

suing that line which seems to suit him best, contributes to furnish those parts which, when put together, make up a complete whole. In this point of view, John Woolman found in Anthony Benezet the coadjutor whom, of all others, the cause required. The former had occupied himself principally on the subject of slavery. The latter went to the root of the evil, and more frequently attacked the trade. The former chiefly confined his labours to America, and chiefly to those of his own society there. The latter, when he wrote, did not write for America only, but for Europe also, and endeavoured to spread a knowledge and hatred of the traffic through the great society of the world.

One of the means which Anthony Benezet took to promote the cause in question, (and an effectual one it proved, as far as it went,) was to give his scholars a due knowledge and proper impressions concerning it. Situated as they were likely to be in after-life, in a country where slavery was a custom, he thus prepared many, and this annually, for the promotion of his plans.

To enlighten others, and to give them a similar bias, he had recourse to different measures from time to time. In the almanacs published annually in Philadelphia, he procured articles to be inserted, which he believed would attract the notice of the reader, and make him pause, at least for a while, as to the licitness of the Slave Trade. He wrote also, as he saw occasion, in the public papers of the day. From small things he proceeded to greater. He collected, at length, further information on the subject, and, winding it up with observations and reflections, he produced several little tracts, which he circulated successively (but generally at his own expense), as he considered them adapted to the temper and circumstances of the times.

In the course of this his employment, having found some who had approved his tracts, and to whom, on that account, he wished to write, and sending his tracts to others, to whom he thought it proper to introduce them by letter, he found himself engaged in a correspondence which much engrossed his time, but which proved of great importance in procuring many advocates for his cause.

In the year 1762, when he had obtained a still greater store

of information, he published a larger work. This, however, he entitled *A short Account of that part of Africa inhabited by the Negroes.* In 1767 he published *A Caution and Warning to Great Britain and her Colonies on the calamitous state of the enslaved Negroes in the British Dominions;* and soon after this appeared, *An Historical Account of Guinea, its Situation, Produce, and the general Disposition of its Inhabitants: with an Inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Slave Trade, its Nature, and Calamitous Effects.* This pamphlet contained a clear and distinct developement of the subject, from the best authorities. It contained, also, the sentiments of many enlightened men upon it; and it became instrumental, beyond any other book ever before published, in disseminating a proper knowledge and detestation of this trade.

Anthony Benezet may be considered as one of the most zealous, vigilant, and active advocates which the cause of the oppressed Africans ever had. He seemed to have been born and to have lived for the promotion of it, and therefore he never omitted any the least opportunity of serving it. If a person called upon him who was going a journey, his first thoughts usually were, how he could make him an instrument in its favour; and he either gave him tracts to distribute, or he sent letters by him, or he gave him some commission on the subject; so that he was the means of employing several persons at the same time, in various parts of America, in advancing the work he had undertaken.

In the same manner he availed himself of every other circumstance, as far as he could, to the same end. When he heard that Mr. Granville Sharp had obtained, in the year 1772, the noble verdict in the cause of Somerset the slave, he opened a correspondence with him, which he kept up, that there might be an union of action between them for the future, as far as it could be effected, and that they might each give encouragement to the other to proceed.

He opened also a correspondence with George Whitfield and John Wesley, that these might assist him in promoting the cause of the oppressed.

He wrote also a letter to the Countess of Huntingdon on the

following subject:—She had founded a college, at the recommendation of George Whitfield, called the Orphan-house, near Savannah, in Georgia, and had endowed it. The object of this institution was to furnish scholastic instruction to the poor, and to prepare some of them for the ministry. George Whitfield, ever attentive to the cause of the poor Africans, thought that this institution might have been useful to them also; but soon after his death, they who succeeded him bought slaves, and these in unusual numbers, to extend the rice and indigo plantations belonging to the college. The letter then in question was written by Anthony Benezet, in order to lay before the Countess, as a religious woman, the misery she was occasioning in Africa, by allowing the managers of her college in Georgia to give encouragement to the Slave Trade. The Countess replied, that such a measure should never have her countenance, and that she would take care to prevent it.

On discovering that the Abbé Raynal had brought out his celebrated work, in which he manifested a tender feeling in behalf of the injured Africans, he entered into a correspondence with him, hoping to make him yet more useful to their cause.

Finding, also, in the year 1783, that the Slave Trade, which had greatly declined during the American war, was reviving, he addressed a pathetic letter to our Queen, (as I mentioned in the last chapter,) who, on hearing the high character of the writer of it from Benjamin West, received it with marks of peculiar condescension and attention. The following is a copy of it:—

"To Charlotte, Queen of Great Britain.

"Impressed with a sense of religious duty, and encouraged by the opinion generally entertained of thy benevolent disposition to succour the distressed, I take the liberty, very respectfully, to offer to thy perusal some tracts, which, I believe, faithfully describe the suffering condition of many hundred thousands of our fellow-creatures of the African race, great numbers of whom, rent from every tender connexion in life, are annually taken from their native land, to endure, in the American

islands and plantations, a most rigorous and cruel slavery; whereby many, very many of them, are brought to a melancholy and untimely end.

" When it is considered that the inhabitants of Great Britain, who are themselves so eminently blessed in the enjoyment of religious and civil liberty, have long been, and yet are, very deeply concerned in this flagrant violation of the common rights of mankind, and that even its national authority is exerted in support of the African Slave Trade, there is much reason to apprehend that this has been, and, as long as the evil exists, will continue to be, an occasion of drawing down the Divine displeasure on the nation and its dependencies. May these considerations induce thee to interpose thy kind endeavours in behalf of this greatly injured people, whose abject situation gives them an additional claim to the pity and assistance of the generous mind, inasmuch as they are altogether deprived of the means of soliciting effectual relief for themselves; that so thou mayest not only be a blessed instrument in the hand of him ' by whom kings reign and princes decree justice,' to avert the awful judgments by which the empire has already been so remarkably shaken, but that the blessings of thousands ready to perish may come upon thee, at a time when the superior advantages attendant on thy situation in this world will no longer be of any avail to thy consolation and support.

" To the tracts on this subject to which I have thus ventured to crave thy particular attention, I have added some which at different times I have believed it my duty to publish*, and which, I trust, will afford thee some satisfaction, their design being for the furtherance of that universal peace and good-will amongst men, which the Gospel was intended to introduce.

" I hope thou wilt kindly excuse the freedom used on this occasion by an ancient man, whose mind, for more than forty years past, has been much separated from the common intercourse of the world, and long painfully exercised in the consideration of the miseries under which so large a part of mankind, equally

* These related to the principles of the religious society of the Quakers.

with us the objects of redeeming love, are suffering the most unjust and grievous oppression, and who sincerely desires thy temporal and eternal felicity, and that of thy royal consort.

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

Anthony Benezet, besides the care he bestowed upon forwarding the cause of the oppressed Africans in different parts of the world, found time to promote the comforts, and improve the condition of those, in the state in which he lived. Apprehending that much advantage would arise both to them and the public from instructing them in common learning, he zealously promoted the establishment of a school for that purpose. Much of the two last years of his life he devoted to a personal attendance on this school, being earnestly desirous that they who came to it might be better qualified for the enjoyment of that freedom to which great numbers of them had been then restored. To this he sacrificed the superior emoluments of his former school, and his bodily ease also, although the weakness of his constitution seemed to demand indulgence. By his last will he directed, that, after the decease of his widow, his whole little fortune (the savings of the industry of fifty years) should, except a few very small legacies, be applied to the support of it. During his attendance upon it he had the happiness to find, (and his situation enabled him to make the comparison,) that Providence had been equally liberal to the Africans in genius and talents as to other people.

After a few days' illness, this excellent man died at Philadelphia, in the spring of 1784. The interment of his remains was attended by several thousands of all ranks, professions, and parties, who united in deploring their loss. The mournful procession was closed by some hundreds of those poor Africans who had been personally benefited by his labours, and whose behaviour on the occasion showed the gratitude and affection they considered to be due to him as their own private benefactor, as well as the benefactor of their whole race.

Such, then, were the labours of the Quakers in America; of individuals, from 1718 to 1784, and of the body at large, from

1696 to 1787, in this great cause of humanity and religion. Nor were the effects produced from these otherwise than corresponding with what might have been expected from such an union of exertion in such a cause; for both the evils, that is, the evil of buying and selling, and the evil of using slaves, ceased at length with the members of this benevolent society. The leaving off all concern with the Slave Trade took place first. The abolition of slavery, though it followed, was not so speedily accomplished; for, besides the loss of property, when slaves were manumitted, without any pecuniary consideration in return, their owners had to struggle, in making them free, against the laws and customs of the times. In Pennsylvania, where the law in this respect was the most favourable, the parties wishing to give freedom to a slave were obliged to enter into a bond for the payment of thirty pounds currency, in case the said slave should become chargeable for maintenance. In New Jersey the terms were far less favourable, as the estate of the owner remained liable to the consequences of misconduct in the slave, or even in his posterity. In the southern parts of America manumission was not permitted but on terms amounting nearly to a prohibition. But, notwithstanding these difficulties, the Quakers could not be deterred, as they became convinced of the unlawfulness of holding men in bondage, from doing that which they believed to be right. Many liberated their slaves, whatever the consequences were; and some gave the most splendid example in doing it, not only by consenting, as others did, thus to give up their property, and to incur the penalties of manumission, but by calculating and giving what was due to them, over and above their food and clothing, for wages * from the beginning of their slavery to the day when their liberation commenced. Thus manumission went on, some sacrificing more, and others less; some granting it sooner, and others later; till, in the year 1787 † there was not a slave in the possession of an acknowledged Quaker.

* One of the brightest instances was that afforded by Warner Mifflin. He gave unconditional liberty to his slaves. He paid all the adults, on their discharge, the sum, which arbitrators, mutually chosen, awarded them.

† Previously to the year 1787, several of the states had made the terms of manumission more easy.

Having given to the reader the history of the third class of forerunners and coadjutors, as it consisted of the Quakers in America, I am now to continue it, as it consisted of an union of these with others on the same continent, in the year 1774, in behalf of the African race. To do this, I shall begin with the causes which led to the production of this great event.

And, in the first place, as example is more powerful than precept, we cannot suppose that the Quakers could have shown these noble instances of religious principle, without supposing also that individuals of other religious denominations would be morally instructed by them. They who lived in the neighbourhood where they took place, must have become acquainted with the motives which led to them. Some of them must at least have praised the action, though they might not themselves have been ripe to follow the example: nor is it at all improbable that these might be led, in the course of the workings of their own minds, to a comparison between their own conduct and that of the Quakers on this subject, in which they themselves might appear to be less worthy in their own eyes. And as there is sometimes a spirit of rivalship among the individuals of religious sects, where the character of one is sounded forth as higher than that of another; this, if excited by such a circumstance, would probably operate for good. It must have been manifest also to many, after a lapse of time, that there was no danger in what the Quakers had done, and that there was even sound policy in the measure. But, whatever were the several causes, certain it is, that the example of the Quakers in leaving off all concern with the Slave Trade, and in liberating their slaves, (scattered, as they were, over various parts of America,) contributed to produce in many of a different religious denomination from themselves, a more tender disposition than had been usual towards the African race.

But a similar disposition towards these oppressed people was created in others, by means of other circumstances or causes. In the early part of the eighteenth century, Judge Sewell of New England came forward as a zealous advocate for them: he addressed a memorial to the legislature, which he call d, *The*

Selling of Joseph, and in which he pleaded their cause, both as a lawyer and a Christian. This memorial produced an effect upon many, but particularly upon those of his own persuasion; and from this time the Presbyterians appear to have encouraged a sympathy in their favour.

In the year 1739, the celebrated George Whitfield became an instrument in turning the attention of many others to their hard case, and of begetting in these a fellow sympathy towards them. This laborious minister, having been deeply affected with what he had seen in the course of his religious travels in America, thought it his duty to address a letter from Georgia to the inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina. This letter was printed in the year above mentioned, and is in part as follows:—

"As I lately passed through your provinces in my way hither, I was sensibly touched with a fellow-feeling for the miseries of the poor negroes. Whether it be lawful for Christians to buy slaves, and thereby encourage the nations, from whom they are bought, to be at perpetual war with each other, I shall not take upon me to determine. Sure I am, it is sinful, when they have bought them to use them as bad as though they were brutes, nay, worse; and whatever particular exceptions there may be, (as I would charitably hope there are some,) I fear the generality of you who own negroes are liable to such a charge; for your slaves, I believe, work as hard, if not harder, than the horses whereon you ride. These, after they have done their work, are fed and taken proper care of; but many negroes when wearied with labour in your plantations, have been obliged to grind their corn after their return home: your dogs are caressed and fondled at your table, but your slaves, who are frequently styled dogs or beasts, have not an equal privilege; they are scarce permitted to pick up the crumbs which fall from their master's table: not to mention what numbers have been given up to the inhuman usage of cruel taskmasters, who, by their unrelenting scourges have ploughed their backs and made long furrows, and at length brought the meven unto death. When, passing along, I have viewed your plantations cleared and cultivated, many spacious

houses built, and the owners of them faring sumptuously every day, my blood has frequently almost run cold within me, to consider how many of your slaves had neither convenient food to eat, nor proper raiment to put on, notwithstanding most of the comforts you enjoy were solely owing to their indefatigable labours."

The letter, from which this is an extract, produced a desirable effect upon many of those who perused it, but particularly upon such as began to be seriously disposed in these times. And as George Whitfield continued a firm friend to the poor Africans, never losing an opportunity of serving them, he interested, in the course of his useful life, many thousands of his followers in their favour.

To this account it may be added, that from the year 1762 ministers, who were in the connection of John Wesley, began to be settled in America, and that as these were friends to the oppressed Africans also, so they contributed in their turn* to promote a softness of feeling towards them among those of their own persuasion.

In consequence then of these and other causes, a considerable number of persons of various religious denominations, had appeared at different times in America, besides the Quakers, who, though they had not distinguished themselves by resolutions and manumissions as religious bodies, were yet highly friendly to the African cause. This friendly disposition began to manifest itself about the year 1770; for when a few quakers, as individuals, began at that time to form little associations in the middle provinces of North America, to discourage the introduction of slaves among people in their own neighbourhoods, who were not of their own Society, and to encourage the manumission of those already in bondage, they were joined as colleagues by

* It must not be forgotten, that the example of the Moravians had its influence also in directing men to their duty towards these oppressed people; for though, when they visited this part of the world for their conversion, they never meddled with the political state of things, by recommending it to masters to alter the condition of their slaves, as believing religion could give comfort in the most abject situations in life, yet they uniformly freed those slaves who came into their own possession.

several persons of this description*, who co-operated with them in the promotion of their design.

This disposition, however, became more manifest in the year 1772; for the house of burgesses of Virginia presented a petition to the king, beseeching his majesty to remove all those restraints on his governors of that colony, which inhibited their assent to such laws as might check that inhuman and impolitic commerce, the Slave Trade: and it is remarkable, that the refusal of the British government to permit the Virginians to exclude slaves from among them by law, was enumerated afterwards among the public reasons for separating from the mother country.

But this friendly disposition was greatly increased in the year 1773, by the literary labours of Dr. Benjamin Rush, of Philadelphia†, who, I believe, is a member of the Presbyterian Church: for in this year, at the instigation of Anthony Benezet, he took up the cause of the oppressed Africans in a little work, which he entitled, *An Address to the Inhabitants of the British Settlements, on the Slavery of the Negroes;* and soon afterwards in another, which was a vindication of the first, in answer to an acrimonious attack by a West Indian planter. These publications contained many new observations: they were written in a polished style; and while they exhibited the erudition and talents, they showed the liberality and benevolence of the author. Having had a considerable circulation, they spread conviction among many, and promoted the cause for which they had been so laudably undertaken. Of the great increase of friendly disposition towards the African cause in this very year, we have this remarkable proof; that when the Quakers, living in East and West Jersey, wished to petition the legislature, to obtain an act of assembly for the more equitable manumission of slaves in that province, so many others of different persuasions joined them,

* It then appeared that individuals among those of the Church of England, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, and others, had begun in a few instances to liberate their slaves.

† Dr. Rush has been better known since for his other literary works, such as his *Medical Dissertations*, his *Treatises on the Discipline of Schools, Criminal Law*, &c.

that the petition was signed by upwards of three thousand persons.

But in the next year, or in the year 1774*, the increased good-will towards the Africans became so apparent, but more particularly in Pennsylvania, where the Quakers were more numerous than in any other state, that they, who considered themselves more immediately as the friends of these injured people, thought it right to avail themselves of it: and accordingly James Pemberton, one of the most conspicuous of the Quakers in Pennsylvania, and Dr. Rush, one of the most conspicuous of those belonging to the various other religious communities in that province, undertook, in conjunction with others, the important task of bringing those into a society who were friendly to this cause. In this undertaking they succeeded. And hence arose that union of the Quakers with others, to which I have been directing the attention of the reader, and by which the third class of forerunners and coadjutors becomes now complete. This society, which was confined to Pennsylvania, was the first ever formed in America, in which there was an union of persons of different religious denominations in behalf of the African race.

But this society had scarcely begun to act, when the war broke out between England and America, which had the effect of checking its operations. This was considered as a severe blow upon it. But as those things which appear most to our disadvantage, turn out often the most to our benefit, so the war, by giving birth to the independence of America, was ultimately favourable to its progress. For as this contrast had produced during its continuance, so it left, when it was over, a general enthusiasm for liberty. Many talked of little else but of the freedom they had gained. These were naturally led to the consideration of those among them who were groaning in bondage. They began to feel for their hard case. They began to think that they should not deserve the new blessing which they had acquired if they denied it to others. Thus the discussions,

* In this year, Elhanan Winchester, a supporter of the doctrine of universal redemption, turned the attention of many of his hearers to this subject, both by private interference and by preaching expressly upon it.

which originated in this contest, became the occasion of turning the attention of many, who might not otherwise have thought of it, towards the miserable condition of the slaves.

Nor were writers wanting, who, influenced by considerations on the war, and the independence resulting from it, made their works subservient to the same benevolent end. A work, entitled *A Serious Address to the Rulers of America on the Inconsistency of their Conduct respecting Slavery, forming a Contrast between the Encroachments of England on American Liberty and American Injustice in tolerating Slavery;* which appeared in 1783, was particularly instrumental in producing this effect. This excited a more than usual attention to the case of these oppressed people, and where most of all it could be useful; for the author compared in two opposite columns the animated speeches and resolutions of the members of congress in behalf of their own liberty with their conduct in continuing slavery to others. Hence the legislature began to feel the inconsistency of the practice; and so far had the sense of this inconsistency spread there, that when the delegates met from each state to consider of a federal union, there was a desire that the abolition of the Slave Trade should be one of the articles in it. This was, however, opposed by the delegates from North and South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Georgia, the five states which had the greatest concern in slaves. But even these offered to agree to the article, provided a condition was annexed to it, (which was afterwards done,) that the power of such abolition should not commence in the legislature till the 1st of January, 1808.

In consequence then of these different circumstances, the Society of Pennsylvania, the object of which was "for promoting the abolition of slavery and the relief of free negroes unlawfully held in bondage," became so popular, that in the year 1787 it was thought desirable to enlarge it. Accordingly several new members were admitted into it. The celebrated Dr. Franklin, who had long warmly espoused the cause of the injured Africans, was appointed president; James Pemberton and Jonathan Penrose were appointed vice-presidents; Dr. Benjamin Rush and Tench Coxe, secretaries; James Star, treasurer; William Lewis, John

D. Coxe, Miers Fisher, and William Rawle, counsellors; Thomas Harrison, Nathan Boys, James Whiteall, James Reed, John Todd, Thomas Armatt, Norris Jones, Samuel Richards, Francis Bayley, Andrew Carson, John Warner, and Jacob Shoemaker, junior, an electing committee; and Thomas Shields, Thomas Parker, John Oldden, William Zane, John Warner, and William Mc Elhenny, an acting committee for carrying on the purposes of the institution.

I shall now only observe further upon this subject, that as a society, consisting of an union of the Quakers, with others of other religious denominations, was established for Pennsylvania in behalf of the oppressed Africans; so different societies, consisting each of a similar union of persons, were established in New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and other states for the same object, and that these afterwards held a correspondence and personal communion with each other for the promotion of it.

CHAPTER VI.

Observations on the three classes already introduced.—Coincidence of extraordinary circumstances.—Individuals in each of these classes, who seem to have had an education as it were to qualify them for promoting the cause of the abolition; Sharp and Ramsay in the first; Dillwyn in the second; Pemberton and Rush in the third.—These, with their respective classes, acted on motives of their own, and independently of each other; and yet, from circumstances neither foreseen nor known by them, they were in the way of being easily united in 1787.—William Dillwyn, the great medium of connexion between them all.

If the reader will refer to his recollection, he will find that I have given the history of three of the classes of the forerunners and coadjutors in the great cause of the abolition of the Slave Trade up to the time proposed. He will of course expect that I should proceed with the history of the fourth. But, as I foresee that, by making certain observations upon the classes already introduced in the present, rather than in any future, place, I shall be able to give him clearer views on the subject, I shall postpone the history of the remaining class to the next chapter.

The account which I shall now give, will exhibit a concurrence of extraordinary and important circumstances. It will show, first, that in each of the three classes now introduced, there were individuals, in the year 1787, who had been educated as it were for the purpose of becoming peculiarly qualified to act together for the promotion of the abolition of the Slave Trade. It will show, secondly, that these, with their respective classes, acted upon their own principles, distinctly and independently of each other. And lastly, that by means of circumstances, which they themselves had neither foreseen nor contrived, a junction between them was rendered easily practicable, and that it was beginning to take place at the period assigned.

The first class of forerunners and coadjutors consisted principally, as it has appeared, of persons in England of various descriptions. These, I may observe, had no communication with each other as to any plan for the abolition of the Slave Trade.

There were two individuals, however, among them who were more conspicuous than the rest, namely, Granville Sharp, the first labourer, and Mr. Ramsay, the first controversial writer, in the cause.

That Granville Sharp received an education as if to become qualified to unite with others, in the year 1787, for this important object, must have appeared from the history of his labours, as detailed in several of the preceding pages. The same may be said of Mr. Ramsay; for it has already appeared that he lived in the island of St. Christopher, where he made his observations, and studied the laws, relative to the treatment of slaves, for nineteen years.

That Granville Sharp acted on grounds distinct from those in any of the other classes is certain. For he knew nothing at this time either of the Quakers in England or of those in America, any more than that they existed by name. Had it not been for the case of Jonathan Strong, he might never have attached himself to the cause. A similar account may be given of Mr. Ramsay; for, if it had not been for what he had seen in the island of St. Christopher, he had never embarked in it. It was from scenes, which he had witnessed there, that he began to feel on the subject. These feelings he communicated to others on his return to England, and these urged him into action.

With respect to the second class, the reader will recollect that it consisted of the Quakers in England: first, of George Fox; then of the Quakers as a body; then of individuals belonging to that body, who formed themselves into a committee, independently of it, for the promotion of the object in question. This committee, it may be remembered, consisted of six persons, of whom one was William Dillwyn.

That William Dillwyn became fitted for the station, which he was afterwards to take, will be seen shortly. He was born in America, and was a pupil of the venerable Benezet, who took pains very early to interest his feelings on this great subject. Benezet employed him occasionally, I mean in a friendly manner, as his amanuensis, to copy his manuscripts for publication, as well as several of his letters written in behalf of the cause. This gave

his scholar an insight into the subject; who, living besides in the land where both the Slave Trade and slavery were established, obtained an additional knowledge of them, so as to be able to refute many of those objections, to which others, for want of local observation, could never have replied.

In the year 1772, Anthony Benezet introduced William Dillwyn by letter to several of the principal people of Carolina, with whom he had himself corresponded on the sufferings of the poor Africans, and desired him to have interviews with them on the subject. He charged him also to be very particular in making observations as to what he should see there. This journey was of great use to the latter, in fixing him as the friend of these oppressed people; for he saw so much of their cruel treatment in the course of it, that he felt an anxiety ever afterwards, amounting to a duty, to do every thing in his power for their relief.

In the year 1773, William Dillwyn, in conjunction with Richard Smith and Daniel Wells, two of his own society, wrote a pamphlet in answer to arguments then prevailing, that the manumission of slaves would be injurious. This pamphlet—which was entitled, *Brief Considerations on Slavery, and the Expediency of its Abolition; with some Hints on the Means whereby it may be gradually effected*,—proved that in lieu of the usual security required, certain sums paid at the several periods of manumission would amply secure the public, as well as the owners of the slaves, from any future burdens. In the same year also, when the society, joined by several hundreds of others in New Jersey, presented a petition to the legislature, (as mentioned in the former chapter,) to obtain an act of assembly for the more equitable manumission of slaves in that province, William Dillwyn was one of a deputation, which was heard at the bar of the assembly for that purpose.

In 1774, he came to England, but his attention was still kept alive to the subject; for he was the person by whom Anthony Benezet sent his letter to the Countess of Huntingdon, as before related. He was also the person to whom the same venerable defender of the African race sent his letter, before spoken of, to be forwarded to the Queen.

That William Dillwyn, and those of his own class in England, acted upon motives very distinct from those of the former class, may be said with truth; for they acted upon the constitutional principles of their own society, as incorporated into its discipline: which principles would always have incited them to the subversion of slavery, as far as they themselves were concerned, whether any other person had abolished it or not. To which it may be added, as a further proof of the originality of their motives, that the Quakers have had, ever since their institution as a religious body, but little intercourse with the world.

The third class, to which I now come, consisted, as we have seen, first of the Quakers in America; and secondly, of an union of these with others on the same continent. The principal individuals concerned in this union were James Pemberton and Dr. Rush. The former of these, having taken an active part in several of the yearly meetings of his own society relative to the oppressed Africans, and having been in habits of intimacy and friendship with John Woolman and Anthony Benezet, with the result of whose labours he was acquainted, may be supposed to have become qualified to take a leading station in the promotion of their cause. Dr. Rush also had shown himself, as has appeared, an able advocate, and had even sustained a controversy in their favour. That the two last mentioned acted also on motives of their own, or independently of those belonging to the other two classes, when they formed their association in Pennsylvania, will be obvious from these circumstances; first, that most of those of the first class, who contributed to throw the greatest light and odium upon the Slave Trade, had not then made their public appearance in the world. And, with respect to the second class, the little committee belonging to it had neither been formed nor thought of.

And as the individuals in each of the three classes, who have now been mentioned, had an education as it were to qualify them for acting together in this great cause, and had moved independently of each other; so it will appear that, by means of circumstances, which they themselves had neither foreseen nor contrived,

a junction between them was rendered easily practicable, and that it was beginning to take place at the period assigned.

To show this, I must first remind the reader, that Anthony Benezet, as soon as he heard of the result of the case of Somerset, opened a correspondence with Granville Sharp, which was kept up to the encouragement of both. In the year 1774, when he learned that William Dillwyn was going to England, he gave him letters to that gentleman. Thus one of the most conspicuous of the second class was introduced, accidentally as it were, to one of the most conspicuous of the first. In the year 1775, William Dillwyn went back to America, but, on his return to England to settle, he renewed his visits to Granville Sharp. Thus the connexion was continued. To these observations I may now add, that Samuel Hoare, of the same class as William Dillwyn, had, in consequence of the Bishop of Chester's sermon, begun a correspondence in 1784, as before mentioned, with Mr. Ramsay, who was of the same class as Mr. Sharp. Thus four individuals of the two first classes were in the way of an union with one another.

But circumstances equally natural contributed to render an union between the members of the second and the third classes easily practicable also. For what was more natural than that William Dillwyn, who was born and who had resided long in America, should have connexions there? He had long cultivated a friendship (not then knowing to what it would lead) with James Pemberton. His intimacy with him was like that of a family connexion. They corresponded together; they corresponded also as kindred hearts, relative to the Slave Trade. Thus two members of the second and third classes had opened an intercourse on the subject, and thus was William Dillwyn the great medium, through whom the members of the two classes now mentioned, as well as the members of all the three, might be easily united also, if a fit occasion should offer.

CHAPTER VII.

Fourth class of forerunners and coadjutors up to 1787.—Dr. Peckard, vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge, the first of these; gives out the Slave Trade as the subject for one of the annual prizes.—Author writes and obtains the first of these; reads his Dissertation in the Senate-house in the summer of 1785; his feelings on the subject during his return home; is desirous of aiding the cause of the Africans, but sees great difficulties; determines to publish his prize essay for this purpose; is accidentally thrown into the way of James Phillips, who introduces him to W. Dillwyn, the connecting medium of the three classes before mentioned; and to G. Sharp and Mr. Ramsay, and to R. Phillips.

I PROCEED now to the fourth class of forerunners and coadjutors up to the year 1787 in the great cause of the abolition of the Slave Trade.

The first of these was Dr. Peckard. This gentleman had distinguished himself in the earlier part of his life by certain publications on the intermediate state of the soul, and by others in favour of civil and religious liberty. To the latter cause he was a warm friend, seldom omitting any opportunity of declaring his sentiments in its favour. In the course of his preferment he was appointed by Sir John Griffin, afterwards Lord Howard of Walden, to the mastership of Magdalen College in the University of Cambridge. In this high office he considered it to be his duty to support those doctrines which he had espoused when in an inferior station; and accordingly, when in the year 1784 it devolved upon him to preach a sermon, before the University of Cambridge, he chose his favourite subject: in the handling of which he took an opportunity of speaking of the Slave Trade in the following nervous manner:—

"Now, whether we consider the crime with respect to the individuals concerned in this most barbarous and cruel traffic, or whether we consider it as patronized and encouraged by the laws of the land, it presents to our view an equal degree of enormity. A crime, founded on a dreadful pre-eminence in wickedness—a crime, which being both of individuals and the nation, must

sometime draw down upon us the heaviest judgment of Almighty God, who made of one blood all the sons of men, and who gave to all equally a natural right to liberty; and who, ruling all the kingdoms of the earth with equal providential justice, cannot suffer such deliberate, such monstrous iniquity, to pass long unpunished."

But Dr. Peckard did not consider this delivery of his testimony, though it was given before a learned and religious body, as a sufficient discharge of his duty, while any opportunity remained of renewing it with effect. And, as such an one offered in the year 1785, when he was vice-chancellor of the University, he embraced it. In consequence of his office, it devolved upon him to give out two subjects for Latin dissertations, one to the middle bachelors, and the other to the senior bachelors of arts. They who produced the best were to obtain the prizes. To the latter he proposed the following: *Anne liceat Invitos in Servitutem dare?* or, *Is it right to make slaves of others against their will?*

This circumstance of giving out subjects for the prizes, though only an ordinary measure, became the occasion of my own labours, or of the real honour which I feel in being able to consider myself as the next coadjutor of this class in the cause of the injured Africans. For it happened in this year that, being of the order of senior bachelors, I became qualified to write. I had gained a prize for the best Latin dissertation in the former year, and, therefore, it was expected that I should obtain one in the present, or I should be considered as having lost my reputation both in the eyes of the University and of my own College. It had happened also, that I had been honoured with the first of the prizes * in that year, and therefore it was expected again, that I should obtain the first on this occasion. The acquisition of the second, however honourable, would have been considered as a falling off, or as a loss of former fame. I felt myself, therefore, particularly called upon to maintain my post. And, with feelings of this kind, I began to prepare myself for the question.

In studying the thesis, I conceived it to point directly to the

* There are two prizes on each subject, one for the best and the other for the second-best essays.

African Slave Trade, and more particularly as I knew that Dr. Peckard, in the sermon which I have mentioned, had pronounced so warmly against it. At any rate, I determined to give it this construction. But, alas! I was wholly ignorant of this subject; and, what was unfortunate, a few weeks only were allowed for the composition. I was determined, however, to make the best use of my time. I got access to the manuscript papers of a deceased friend, who had been in the trade. I was acquainted also with several officers who had been in the West Indies, and from these I gained something. But I still felt myself at a loss for materials, and I did not know where to get them; when going by accident into a friend's house, I took up a newspaper then lying on his table. One of the articles which attracted my notice, was an advertisement of ANTHONY BENEZET'S *Historical Account of Guinea.* I soon left my friend and his paper, and, to lose no time, hastened to London to buy it. In this precious book I found almost all I wanted. I obtained, by means of it, a knowledge of, and access to, the great authorities of Adanson, Moore, Barbot, Smith, Bosman, and others. It was of great consequence to know what these persons had said upon this subject. For, having been themselves either long resident in Africa, or very frequently there, their knowledge of it could not be questioned. Having been concerned also in the trade, it was not likely that they would criminate themselves more than they could avoid. Writing too at a time when the abolition was not even thought of, they could not have been biassed with any view to that event. And, lastly, having been dead many years, they could not have been influenced, as living evidences may be supposed to have been, either to conceal or exaggerate, as their own interest might lead them, either by being concerned in the continuance of the trade, or by supporting the opinions of those of their patrons in power, who were on the different sides of this question.

Furnished then in this manner, I began my work. But no person can tell the severe trial which the writing of it proved to me. I had expected pleasure from the invention of the arguments, from the arrangement of them, from the putting of them together, and from the thought in the interim that I was engaged

in an innocent contest for literary honour. But all my pleasure was damped by the facts which were now continually before me. It was but one gloomy subject from morning to night. In the day-time I was uneasy. In the night I had little rest. I sometimes never closed my eye-lids for grief. It became now not so much a trial for academical reputation, as for the production of a work, which might be useful to injured Africa. And keeping this idea in my mind ever after the perusal of Benezet, I always slept with a candle in my room, that I might rise out of my bed and put down such thoughts as might occur to me in the night, if I judged them valuable, conceiving that no arguments of any moment should be lost in so great a cause. Having at length finished this painful task, I sent my Essay to the vice-chancellor, and soon afterwards found myself honoured as before with the first prize.

As it is usual to read these Essays publicly in the senate-house soon after the prize is adjudged, I was called to Cambridge for this purpose. I went and performed my office. On returning however to London, the subject of it almost wholly engrossed my thoughts. I became at times very seriously affected while upon the road. I stopped my horse occasionally, and dismounted and walked. I frequently tried to persuade myself in these intervals that the contents of my Essay could not be true. The more, however, I reflected upon them, or rather upon the authorities on which they were founded, the more I gave them credit. Coming in sight of Wades Mill, in Hertfordshire, I sat down disconsolate on the turf by the roadside and held my horse. Here a thought came into my mind, that if the contents of the Essay were true, it was time some person should see these calamities to their end. Agitated in this manner, I reached home. This was in the summer of 1785.

In the course of the autumn of the same year I experienced similar impressions. I walked frequently into the woods, that I might think on the subject in solitude, and find relief to my mind there. But there the question still recurred, "Are these things true?" Still the answer followed as instantaneously "They are." Still the result accompanied it, "Then surely some person should

interfere." I then began to envy those who had seats in parliament, and who had great riches, and widely extended connexions, which would enable them to take up this cause. Finding scarcely any one at that time who thought of it, I was turned frequently to myself. But here many difficulties arose. It struck me, among others, that a young man of only twenty-four years of age could not have that solid judgment or knowledge of men, manners, and things, which were requisite to qualify him to undertake a task of such magnitude and importance;—and with whom was I to unite? I believed also, that it looked so much like one of the feigned labours of Hercules, that my understanding would be suspected if I proposed it. On ruminating, however, on the subject, I found one thing at least practicable, and that this also was in my power. I could translate my Latin dissertation. I could enlarge it usefully. I could see how the public received it, or how far they were likely to favour any serious measures, which should have a tendency to produce the abolition of the Slave Trade. Upon this then I determined; and in the middle of the month of November 1785, I began my work.

By the middle of January, I had finished half of it, though I had made considerable additions. I now thought of engaging with some bookseller to print it when finished. For this purpose I called upon Mr. Cadell, in the Strand, and consulted him about it. He said that as the original essay had been honoured by the University of Cambridge with the first prize, this circumstance would insure it a respectable circulation among persons of taste. I own I was not much pleased with his opinion. I wished the essay to find its way among useful people, and among such as would act and think with me. Accordingly I left Mr. Cadell, after having thanked him for his civility, and determined, as I thought I had time sufficient before dinner, to call upon a friend in the city. In going past the Royal Exchange, Mr. Joseph Hancock, one of the religious society of the Quakers, and with whose family my own had been long united in friendship, suddenly met me. He first accosted me by saying that I was the person whom he was wishing to see. He then asked me why I had not published my prize essay. I asked him in return what

had made him think of that subject in particular. He replied that his own society had long taken it up as a religious body, and individuals among them were wishing to find me out. I asked him who. He answered, James Phillips, a bookseller, in George-yard, Lombard-street, and William Dillwyn, of Walthamstow, and others. Having but little time to spare, I desired him to introduce me to one of them. In a few minutes he took me to James Phillips, who was then the only one of them in town; by whose conversation I was so much interested and encouraged, that without any further hesitation I offered him the publication of my work. This accidental introduction of me to James Phillips was, I found afterwards, a most happy circumstance for the promotion of the cause which I had then so deeply at heart, as it led me to the knowledge of several of those, who became afterwards material coadjutors in it. It was also of great importance to me with respect to the work itself: for he possessed an acute penetration, a solid judgment, and a literary knowledge, which he proved by the many alterations and additions he proposed; and which I believe I uniformly adopted, after mature consideration, from a sense of their real value. It was advantageous to me also, inasmuch as it led me to his friendship, which was never interrupted but by his death.

On my second visit to James Phillips, at which time I brought him about half my manuscript for the press, I desired him to introduce me to William Dillwyn, as he also had mentioned him to me on my first visit, and as I had not seen Mr. Hancock since. Matters were accordingly arranged, and a day appointed before I left him. On this day I had my first interview with my new friend. Two or three others of his own religious society were present, but who they were, I do not now recollect. There seemed to be a great desire among them to know the motive, by which I had been actuated in contending for the prize. I told them frankly that I had no motive but that which other young men in the University had on such occasions; namely, the wish of being distinguished, or of obtaining literary honour; but that I had felt so deeply on the subject of it, that I had lately interested myself in it from a motive of duty. My

conduct seemed to be highly approved by those present, and much conversation ensued, but it was of a general nature.

As William Dillwyn wished very much to see me at his house at Walthamstow, I appointed the 13th of March to spend the day with them there. We talked for the most part, during my stay, on the subject of my essay. I soon discovered the treasure I had met with in his local knowledge, both of the Slave Trade and of slavery, as they existed in the United States; and I gained from him several facts, which, with his permission, I afterwards inserted in my work. But how surprised was I to hear, in the course of our conversation, of the labours of Granville Sharp, of the writings of Ramsay, and of the controversy in which the latter was engaged, of all which I had hitherto known nothing! How surprised was I to learn that William Dillwyn himself had, two years before, associated himself with five others for the purpose of enlightening the public mind upon this great subject! How astonished was I to find that a society had been formed in America for the same object, with some of the principal members of which he was intimately acquainted! And how still more astonished at the inference which instantly rushed upon my mind, that he was capable of being made the great medium of connexion between them all. These thoughts almost overpowered me. I believe that after this I talked but little more to my friend. My mind was overwhelmed with the thought that I had been providentially directed to his house; that the finger of Providence was beginning to be discernible; that the day-star of African liberty was rising, and that probably I might be permitted to become an humble instrument in promoting it.

In the course of attending to my work, as now in the press, James Phillips introduced me also to Granville Sharp, with whom I had afterwards many interesting interviews from time to time, and whom I discovered to be a distant relation by my father's side.

He introduced me also by letter to a correspondence with Mr. Ramsay, who in a short time afterwards came to London to see me.

He introduced me also to his cousin, Richard Phillips, of Lincoln's Inn, who was at that time on the point of joining the religious society of Quakers. In him I found much sympathy, and a willingness to co-operate with me. When dull and disconsolate, he encouraged me. When in spirits, he stimulated me further. Him I am now to mention as a new, but soon afterwards as an active and indefatigable, coadjutor in the cause. But I shall say more concerning him in a future chapter. I shall only now add that my work was at length printed; that it was entitled *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, particularly the African, translated from a Latin Dissertation, which was honoured with the First Prize in the University of Cambridge, for the year* 1785; *with Additions*; and that it was ushered into the world in the month of June, 1786, or in about a year after it had been read in the Senate-house in its first form.

CHAPTER VIII.

Continuation of the fourth class of forerunners and coadjutors up to 1787; Bennet Langton; Dr. Baker; Lord and Lady Scarsdale.—Author visits Ramsay at Teston.—Lady Middleton and Sir Charles (afterwards Lord Barham).—Author declares himself at the house of the latter ready now to devote himself to the cause; reconsiders this declaration or pledge; his reasoning and struggle upon it; persists in it; returns to London; and pursues the work as now a business of his life.

I HAD purposed, as I said before, when I determined to publish my essay, to wait to see how the world would receive it, or what disposition there would be in the public to favour my measures for the abolition of the Slave Trade. But the conversation which I had held on the 13th of March with William Dillwyn, continued to make such an impression upon me, that I thought now there could be no occasion for waiting for such a purpose. It seemed now only necessary to go forward. Others I found had already begun the work. I had been thrown suddenly among these, as into a new world of friends. I believed, also, that a way was opening under Providence for support; and I now thought that nothing remained for me but to procure as many coadjutors as I could.

I had long had the honour of the friendship of Mr. Bennet Langton, and I determined to carry him one of my books, and to interest his feelings in it, with a view of procuring his assistance in the cause. Mr. Langton was a gentleman of an ancient family and respectable fortune in Lincolnshire, but resided then in Queen Square, Westminster. He was known as the friend of Dr. Johnson, Jonas Hanway, Edmund Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and others. Among his acquaintance, indeed, were most of the literary, and eminent professional, and public-spirited men of the times. At court, also, he was well known, and had the esteem of his majesty (George III.), with whom he frequently conversed. His friends were numerous, also, in both houses of the legislature. As to himself, he was much noted for his

learning, but most of all for the great example he gave, with respect to the usefulness and integrity of his life.

By introducing my work to the sanction of a friend of such high character and extensive connexions, I thought I should be doing great things. And so the event proved. For when I went to him after he had read it, I found that it had made a deep impression upon his mind. As a friend to humanity, he lamented over the miseries of the oppressed Africans; and over the crimes of their tyrants, as a friend to morality and religion. He cautioned me, however, against being too sanguine in my expectations, as so many thousands were interested in continuing the trade. Justice, however, which he said weighed with him beyond all private or political interest, demanded a public inquiry, and he would assist me to the utmost of his power in my attempts towards it. From this time he became a zealous and active coadjutor in the cause, and continued so to the end of his valuable life.

The next person, to whom I gave my work with a like view, was Dr. Baker, a clergyman of the Establishment, and with whom I had been in habits of intimacy for some time. Dr. Baker was a learned and pious man. He had performed the duties of his profession, from the time of his initiation into the church, in an exemplary manner; not only by paying a proper attention to the customary services, but by the frequent visitation of the sick and the instruction of the poor. This he had done, too, to admiration in a particularly extensive parish. At the time I knew him, he had May-Fair Chapel, of which an unusual portion of the congregation consisted then of persons of rank and fortune. With most of these he had a personal acquaintance. This was of great importance to me in the promotion of my views. Having left him my book for a month, I called upon him. The result was that which I expected from so good a man. He did not wait for me to ask him for his co-operation, but he offered his services in any way which I might think most eligible; feeling it his duty, as he expressed it, to become an instrument in exposing such a complication of guilt and misery to the world. Dr. Baker became from this time an active coadjutor also, and continued so to his death.

The person to whom I sent my work next, was the late Lord Scarsdale, whose family I had known for about two years. Both he and his lady read it with attention. They informed me, after the perusal of it, that both of them were desirous of assisting me in promoting the cause of the poor Africans. Lady Scarsdale lamented that she might possibly offend near and dear connexions, who had interests in the West Indies, by so doing; but that, conscious of no intention to offend these, and considering the duties of religion to be the first to be attended to, she should be pleased to become useful in so good a cause. Lord Scarsdale also assured me, that, if the subject should ever come before the House of Lords, it should have his constant support.

While attempting to make friends in this manner, I received a letter from Mr. Ramsay, with an invitation to spend a month at his house at Teston, near Maidstone, in Kent. This I accepted, that I might communicate to him the progress I had made, that I might gain more knowledge from him on the subject, and that I might acquire new strength and encouragement to proceed. On hearing my account of my proceedings, which I detailed to him on the first evening of our meeting, he seemed almost overpowered with joy. He said he had been long of opinion that the release of the Africans from the scourges of this cruel trade was within the determined views of Providence, and that by turning the public attention to their misery, we should be the instruments of beginning the good work. He then informed me how long he himself had had their cause at heart; that communicating his feelings to Sir Charles Middleton (afterwards Lord Barham) and his lady, the latter had urged him to undertake a work in their behalf; that her importunities were great respecting it; and that he had on this account, and in obedience also to his own feelings, as has been before mentioned, begun it; but that, foreseeing the censure and abuse which such a subject, treated in any possible manner, must bring upon the author, he had laid it aside for some time. He had, however, resumed it at the solicitation of Dr. Porteus, then Bishop of Chester; after which, in the year 1784, it made its appearance in the world.

I was delighted with this account on the first evening of my

arrival; but more particularly, as I collected from it that I might expect in the Bishop of Chester and Sir Charles Middleton two new friends to the cause. This expectation was afterwards fully realized, as the reader will see in its proper place. But I was still more delighted, when I was informed that Sir Charles and Lady Middleton, with Mrs. Bouverie, lived at Teston Hall, in a park which was but a few yards from the house in which I then was. In the morning I desired an introduction to them, which accordingly took place, and I found myself much encouraged and supported by this visit.

It is not necessary, nor indeed is there room, to detail my employments in this village, or the lonely walks I took there, or the meditations of my mind at such seasons. I will therefore come at once to a particular occurrence. When at dinner one day with the family at Teston Hall, I was much pleased with the turn which the conversation had taken on the subject, and in the joy of my heart I exclaimed, that "I was ready to devote myself to the cause." This brought great commendation from those present; and Sir Charles Middleton added, that if I wanted any information in the course of my future inquiries relative to Africa, which he could procure me as comptroller of the navy, such as extracts from the journals of the ships of war to that continent, or from other papers, I should have free access to his office. This offer I received with thankfulness, and it operated as a new encouragement to me to proceed.

The next morning, when I awoke, one of the first things that struck me was, that I had given a pledge to the company the day before that I would devote myself to the cause of the oppressed Africans. I became a little uneasy at this. I questioned whether I had considered matters sufficiently to be able to go so far with propriety. I determined therefore to give the subject a full consideration, and accordingly I walked to the place of my usual meditations,—the woods.

Having now reached a place of solitude, I began to balance everything on both sides of the question. I considered first, that I had not yet obtained information sufficient on the subject to qualify me for the undertaking of such a work. But I reflected,

on the other hand, that Sir Charles Middleton had just opened to me a new source of knowledge; that I should be backed by the local information of Dillwyn and Ramsay; and that surely, by taking pains, I could acquire more.

I then considered that I had not yet a sufficient number of friends to support me. This occasioned me to review them. I had now Sir Charles Middleton, who was in the House of Commons. I was sure of Dr. Porteus, who was in the House of Lords. I could count upon Lord Scarsdale, who was a peer also. I had secured Mr. Langton, who had a most extensive acquaintance with members of both houses of the legislature. I had also secured Dr. Baker, who had similar connexions. I could depend upon Granville Sharp, James Phillips, Richard Phillips, Ramsay, Dillwyn, and the little committee to which he belonged, as well as the whole society of the Quakers. I thought, therefore, upon the whole, that, considering the short time I had been at work, I was well off with respect to support. I believed, also, that there were still several of my own acquaintance whom I could interest in the question, and I did not doubt that, by exerting myself diligently, persons, who were then strangers to me, would be raised up in time.

I considered next, that it was impossible for a great cause like this to be forwarded without large pecuniary funds. I questioned whether some thousand pounds would not be necessary, and from whence was such a sum to come? In answer to this, I persuaded myself that generous people would be found who would unite with me in contributing their mite towards the undertaking, and I seemed confident that, as the Quakers had taken up the cause as a religious body, they would not be behind-hand in supporting it.

I considered lastly, that if I took up the question, I must devote myself wholly to it. I was sensible that a little labour now and then would be inadequate to the purpose, or that, where the interests of so many thousand persons were likely to be affected, constant exertion would be necessary. I felt certain that if ever the matter were to be taken up, there could be no hope of success, except it should be taken up by some one who

would make it an object or business of his life. I thought too that a man's life might not be more than adequate to the accomplishment of the end. But I knew of no one who could devote such a portion of time to it. Sir Charles Middleton, though he was so warm and zealous, was greatly occupied in the discharge of his office. Mr. Langton spent a great portion of his time in the education of his children. Dr. Baker had a great deal to do in the performance of his parochial duty. The Quakers were almost all of them in trade. I could look therefore to no person but myself; and the question was, whether I was prepared to make the sacrifice. In favour of the undertaking, I urged to myself, that never was any cause, which had been taken up by man in any country or in any age, so great and important; that never was there one in which so much misery was heard to cry for redress; that never was there one in which so much good could be done; never one in which the duty of Christian charity could be so extensively exercised; never one more worthy of the devotion of a whole life towards it; and that, if a man thought properly, he ought to rejoice to have been called into existence, if he were only permitted to become an instrument in forwarding it in any part of its progress. Against these sentiments, on the other hand, I had to urge, that I had been designed for the church; that I had already advanced as far as deacon's orders in it; that my prospects there on account of my connexions were then brilliant, that, by appearing to desert my profession, my family would be dissatisfied, if not unhappy. These thoughts pressed upon me, and rendered the conflict difficult. But the sacrifice of my prospects staggered me, I own, the most. When the other objections, which I have related, occurred to me, my enthusiasm instantly, like a flash of lightning, consumed them; but this stuck to me, and troubled me. I had ambition. I had a thirst after worldly interest and honours, and I could not extinguish it at once. I was more than two hours in solitude under this painful conflict. At length I yielded, not because I saw any reasonable prospect of success in my new undertaking (for all cool-headed and cool-hearted men would have pronounced against it), but in obedience, I believe, to a higher Power. And

I can say, that both on the moment of this resolution, and for some time afterwards, I had more sublime and happy feelings than at any former period of my life.

Having now made up my mind on the subject, I informed Mr. Ramsay, that in a few days I should be leaving Teston, that I might begin my labours, according to the pledge I had given him.

CHAPTER IX.

Continuation of the fourth class of forerunners and coadjutors up to 1787.—Author resolves upon the distribution of his book.—Mr. Sheldon; Sir Herbert Mackworth; Lord Newhaven; Lord Balgonie (afterwards Leven); Lord Hawke; Bishop Porteus.—Author visits African vessels in the Thames; and various persons, for further information.—Visits also Members of Parliament; Sir Richard Hill; Mr. Powys (late Lord Lilford); Mr. Wilberforce and others; conduct of the latter on this occasion.

On my return to London, I called upon William Dillwyn, to inform him of the resolution I had made at Teston, and found him at his town lodgings in the Poultry. I informed him also, that I had a letter of introduction in my pocket from Sir Charles Middleton to Samuel Hoare, with whom I was to converse on the subject. The latter gentleman had interested himself the year before as one of the committee for the Black poor in London, whom Mr. Sharp was sending under the auspices of government to Sierra Leone. He was also, as the reader may see by looking back, a member of the second class of coadjutors, or of the little committee which had branched out of the Quakers in England as before described. William Dillwyn said he would go with me and introduce me himself. On our arrival in Lombard-street, I saw my new friend, with whom we conversed for some time. From thence I proceeded, accompanied by both, to the house of James Phillips in George-yard, to whom I was desirous of communicating my resolution also. We found him at home, conversing with a friend of the same religious society, whose name was Joseph Gurney Bevan. I then repeated my resolution before them all. We had much friendly and satisfactory conversation together. I received much encouragement on every side, and I fixed to meet them again at the place where we then were in three days.

On the evening of the same day, I waited upon Granville Sharp to make the same communication to him. He received it with great pleasure, and he hoped I should have strength to proceed. From thence I went to the Baptist-head coffee-house, in

Chancery-lane, and having engaged with the master of the house, that I should always have one private room to myself when I wanted it, I took up my abode there, in order to be near my friend Richard Phillips of Lincoln's Inn, from whose advice and assistance I had formed considerable expectations.

The first matter for our deliberation, after we had thus become neighbours, was, what plan I ought to pursue to give effect to the resolution I had taken.

After having discussed the matter two or three times at his chambers, it seemed to be our opinion, that, as members of the legislature could do more to the purpose in this question than any other persons, it would be proper to circulate all the remaining copies of my work among these, in order that they might thus obtain information upon the subject. Secondly, that it would be proper that I should wait personally upon several of these also. And thirdly, that I should be endeavouring in the interim to enlarge my own knowledge, that I might thus be enabled to answer the various objections which might be advanced on the other side of the question, as well as become qualified to be a manager of the cause.

On the third day, or at the time appointed, I went with Richard Phillips to George-yard, Lombard-street, where I met all my friends as before. I communicated to them the opinion we had formed at Lincoln's Inn, relative to my future proceedings in the three different branches as now detailed. They approved the plan. On desiring a number of my books to be sent to me at my new lodgings for the purpose of distribution, Joseph Gurney Bevan, who was stated to have been present at the former interview, seemed uneasy, and at length asked me if I was going to distribute these at my own expense. I replied, I was. He appealed immediately to those present whether it ought to be allowed. He asked whether, when a young man was giving up his time from morning till night, they who applauded his pursuit and seemed desirous of co-operating with him, should allow him to make such a sacrifice, or whether they should not at least secure him from loss; and he proposed directly that the remaining part of the edition should be taken off by subscription,

and, in order that my feelings might not be hurt from any supposed stain arising from the thought of gaining any thing by such a proposal, they should be paid for only at the prime cost. I felt myself much obliged to him for this tender consideration about me, and particularly for the latter part of it, under which alone I accepted the offer. Samuel Hoare was charged with the management of the subscription, and the books were to be distributed as I had proposed, and in any way which I myself might prescribe.

This matter having been determined upon, my first care was that the books should be put into proper hands. Accordingly I went round among my friends from day to day, wishing to secure this before I attended to any of the other objects. In this I was much assisted by my friend Richard Phillips. Mr. Langton began the distribution of them. He made a point either of writing to or of calling upon those to whom he sent them. Dr. Baker took the charge of several for the same purpose; Lord and Lady Scarsdale of others; Sir Charles and Lady Middleton of others. Mr. Sheldon, at the request of Richard Phillips, introduced me by letter to several members of parliament, to whom I wished to deliver them myself. Sir Herbert Mackworth, when spoken to by the latter, offered his services also. He seemed to be particularly interested in the cause. He went about to many of his friends in the House of Commons, and this from day to day, to procure their favour towards it. Lord Newhaven was applied to, and distributed some. Lord Balgonie took a similar charge. The late Lord Hawke, who told me that he had long felt for the sufferings of the injured Africans, desired to be permitted to take his share of the distribution among members of the House of Lords, and Dr. Porteus, now Bishop of London, became another coadjutor in the same work.

This distribution of my books having been consigned to proper hands, I began to qualify myself, by obtaining further knowledge, for the management of this great cause. As I had obtained the principal part of it from reading, I thought I ought now to see what could be seen, and to know from living persons what could be known on the subject. With respect to the first of these

points, the river Thames presented itself as at hand. Ships were going occasionally from the port of London to Africa, and why could I not get on board them and examine for myself? After diligent inquiry, I heard of one which had just arrived. I found her to be a little wood-vessel, called the Lively, Captain Williamson, or one which traded to Africa in the natural productions of the country, such as ivory, bees'-wax, Malaguetta pepper, palm-oil, and dye-woods. I obtained specimens of some of these, so that I now became possessed of some of those things of which I had only read before. On conversing with the mate, he showed me one or two pieces of the cloth made by the natives, and from their own cotton. I prevailed upon him to sell me a piece of each. Here new feelings arose, and particularly when I considered that persons of so much apparent ingenuity, and capable of such beautiful work as the Africans, should be made slaves, and reduced to a level with the brute creation. My reflections here on the better use which might be made of Africa by the substitution of another trade, and on the better use which might be made of her inhabitants, served greatly to animate and to sustain me amidst the labour of my pursuits.

The next vessel I boarded was the Fly, Captain Colley. Here I found myself for the first time on the deck of a slave-vessel. The sight of the rooms below and of the gratings above, and of the barricado across the deck, and the explanation of the uses of all these, filled me both with melancholy and horror. I found soon afterwards a fire of indignation kindling within me. I had now scarce patience to talk with those on board. I had not the coolness this first time to go leisurely over the places that were open to me. I got away quickly. But that which I thought I saw horrible in this vessel had the same effect upon me as that which I thought I had seen agreeable in the other, namely, to animate and to invigorate me in my pursuit.

But I will not trouble the reader with any further account of my water-expeditions, while attempting to perfect my knowledge on this subject. I was equally assiduous in obtaining intelligence wherever it could be had; and being now always on the watch, I was frequently falling in with individuals, from whom I gained

something. My object was to see all who had been in Africa, but more particularly those who had never been interested, or who at any rate were not then interested, in the trade. I gained accordingly access very early to General Rooke; to Lieutenant Dalrymple, of the army; to Captain Fiddes, of the engineers; to the reverend Mr. Newton; to Mr. Nisbett, a surgeon in the Minories; to Mr. Devaynes, who was then in parliament, and to many others; and I made it a rule to put down in writing, after every conversation, what had taken place in the course of it. By these means, things began to unfold themselves to me more and more, and I found my stock of knowledge almost daily on the increase.

While, however, I was forwarding this, I was not inattentive to the other object of my pursuit, which was that of waiting upon members personally. The first I called upon was Sir Richard Hill. At the first interview he espoused the cause. I waited then upon others, and they professed themselves friendly; but they seemed to make this profession more from the emotion of good hearts, revolting at the bare mention of the Slave Trade, than from any knowledge concerning it. One, however, whom I visited, Mr. Powys, (the late Lord Lilford,) with whom I had been before acquainted in Northamptonshire, seemed to doubt some of the facts in my book, from a belief that human nature was not capable of proceeding to such a pitch of wickedness. I asked him to name his facts. He selected the case of the hundred and thirty-two slaves who were thrown alive into the sea to defraud the underwriters. I promised to satisfy him fully upon this point, and went immediately to Granville Sharp, who lent me his account of the trial, as reported at large from the notes of the short-hand writer, whom he had employed on the occasion. Mr. Powys read the account. He became, in consequence of it, convinced, as, indeed, he could not otherwise be, of the truth of what I had asserted, and he declared at the same time that, if this were true, there was nothing so horrible related of this trade, which might not immediately be believed. Mr. Powys had been always friendly to this question, but now he took a part in the distribution of my books.

Among those whom I visited was Mr. Wilberforce. On my first interview with him, he stated frankly, that the subject had often employed his thoughts, and that it was near his heart. He seemed earnest about it, and also very desirous of taking the trouble of inquiring further into it. Having read my book, which I had delivered to him in person, he sent for me. He expressed a wish that I would make him acquainted with some of my authorities for the assertions in it, which I did afterwards to his satisfaction. He asked me if I could support it by any other evidence. I told him I could. I mentioned Mr. Newton, Mr. Nisbett, and several others to him. He took the trouble of sending for all these. He made memorandums of their conversation, and, sending for me afterwards, showed them to me. On learning my intention to devote myself to the cause, he paid me many handsome compliments. He then desired me to call upon him often, and to acquaint him with my progress from time to time. He expressed also his willingness to afford me any assistance in his power in the prosecution of my pursuits.

The carrying on of these different objects, together with the writing which was connected with them, proved very laborious, and occupied almost all my time. I was seldom engaged less than sixteen hours in the day. When I left Teston to begin the pursuit as an object of my life, I promised my friend Mr. Ramsay a weekly account of my progress. At the end of the first week my letter to him contained little more than a sheet of paper. At the end of the second it contained three; at the end of the third, six; and at the end of the fourth I found it would be so voluminous, that I was obliged to decline writing it.

CHAPTER X.

Continuation of the fourth class of forerunners and coadjutors up to 1787.—Author goes on to enlarge his knowledge in the different departments of the subject; communicates more frequently with Mr. Wilberforce.—Meetings now appointed at the house of the latter.—Dinner at Mr. Langton's.—Mr. Wilberforce pledges himself there to take up the subject in Parliament; remarkable junction, in consequence, of all the four classes of forerunners and coadjutors before-mentioned.—Committee formed out of these on the 22nd of May, 1787, for the abolition of the Slave Trade.

The manner in which Mr. Wilberforce had received me, and the pains which he had taken, and was still taking, to satisfy himself of the truth of those enormities which had been charged upon the Slave Trade, tended much to enlarge my hope, that they might become at length the subject of a parliamentary inquiry. Richard Phillips, also, to whom I made a report at his chambers almost every evening of the proceedings of the day, had begun to entertain a similar expectation. Of course we unfolded our thoughts to one another; from hence a desire naturally sprung up in each of us to inquire whether any alteration in consequence of this new prospect should be made in my pursuits. On deliberating upon this point, it seemed proper to both of us that the distribution of the books should be continued; that I should still proceed in enlarging my own knowledge; and that I should still wait upon members of the legislature, but with this difference, that I should never lose sight of Mr. Wilberforce, but, on the other hand, that I should rather omit visiting some others than paying a proper attention to him.

One thing however appeared now to be necessary, which had not yet been done. This was to inform our friends in the city, upon whom I had all along occasionally called, that we believed the time was approaching when it would be desirable that we should unite our labours, if they saw no objection to such a measure; for, if the Slave Trade were to become a subject of parliamentary inquiry with a view to the annihilation of it, no indi-

vidual could perform the work which would be necessary for such a purpose. This work must be a work of many; and who so proper to assist in it as they, who had before so honourably laboured in it? In the case of such an event large funds also would be wanted, and who so proper to procure and manage them as these? A meeting was accordingly called at the house of James Phillips, when these our views were laid open. When I stated that from the very time of my hopes beginning to rise I had always had those present in my eye as one day to be fellow-labourers, William Dillwyn replied, that from the time they had first heard of the *Prize Essay*, they also had had their eyes upon me, and, from the time they had first seen me, had conceived a desire of making the same use of me as I had now expressed a wish of making of them, but that matters did not appear ripe at our first interview. Our proposal, however, was approved, and an assurance was given, that an union should take place as soon as it was judged to be seasonable. It was resolved also, that one day in the week* should be appointed for a meeting at the house of James Phillips, where as many might attend as had leisure, and that I should be there to make a report of my progress, by which we might all judge of the fitness of the time of calling ourselves an united body. Pleased now with the thought that matters were put into such a train, I returned to my former objects.

It is not necessary to say anything more of the first of these objects, which was that of the further distribution of my book, than that it was continued, and chiefly by the same hands.

With respect to the enlargement of my knowledge, it was promoted likewise. I now gained access to the Custom-House in London, where I picked up much valuable information for my purpose.

Having had reason to believe that the Slave Trade was peculiarly fatal to those employed in it, I wished much to get copies

* At these weekly meetings I met occasionally Joseph Woods, George Harrison, and John Lloyd, three of the other members, who belonged to the committee of the second class of forerunners and coadjutors as before described. I had seen all of them before, but I do not recollect the time when I first met them.

of many of the muster-rolls from the Custom-House at Liverpool for a given time. James Phillips wrote to his friend William Rathbone, who was one of his own religious society, and who resided there, to procure them. They were accordingly sent up. The examination of these, which took place at the chambers of Richard Phillips, was long and tedious. We looked over them together. We usually met for this purpose at nine in the evening, and we seldom parted till one, and sometimes not till three in the morning. When our eyes were inflamed by the candle, or tired by fatigue, we used to relieve ourselves by walking out within the precincts of Lincoln's Inn, when all seemed to be fast asleep, and thus, as it were, in solitude and in stillness to converse upon them, as well as upon the best means of the further promotion of our cause. These scenes of our early friendship and exertions I shall never forget. I often think of them both with astonishment and with pleasure. Having recruited ourselves in this manner, we used to return to our work. From these muster-rolls, I may now observe that we gained the most important information: we ascertained, beyond the power of contradiction, that more than half of the seamen who went out with the ships in the Slave Trade did not return with them, and that of these so many perished, as amounted to one-fifth of all employed. As to what became of the remainder, the muster-rolls did not inform us; this, therefore, was left to us as a subject for our future inquiry.

In endeavouring to enlarge my knowledge, my thoughts were frequently turned to the West Indian part of the question, and in this department my friend Richard Phillips gained me important intelligence. He put into my hands several documents concerning estates in the West Indies, which he had mostly from the proprietors themselves, where the slaves by mild and prudent usage had so increased in population, as to supersede the necessity of the Slave Trade.

By attending to these and to various other parts of the subject, I began to see as it were with new eyes; I was enabled to make several necessary discriminations, to reconcile things before seemingly contradictory, and to answer many objections which had hitherto put on a formidable shape. But most of all was I

rejoiced at the thought that I should soon be able to prove that which I had never doubted, but which had hitherto been beyond my power in this case, that Providence, in ordaining laws relative to the agency of man, had never made that to be wise which was immoral, and that the Slave Trade would be found as impolitic as it was inhuman and unjust.

In keeping up my visits to members of parliament, I was particularly attentive to Mr. Wilberforce, whom I found daily becoming more interested in the fate of Africa. I now made to him a regular report of my progress, of the sentiments of those in parliament whom I had visited, of the disposition of my friends in the city, of whom he had often heard me speak, of my discoveries from the Custom-Houses of London and Liverpool, of my documents concerning West India estates, and of all, indeed, that had occurred to me worth mentioning. He had himself also been making his inquiries, which he communicated to me in return. Our intercourse had now become frequent, no one week elapsing without an interview: at one of these, I suggested to him the propriety of having occasional meetings at his own house, consisting of a few friends in parliament, who might converse on the subject: of this he approved. The persons present at the first meeting were Mr. Wilberforce, the Honourable John Villiers, Mr. Powys, Sir Charles Middleton, Sir Richard Hill, Mr. Granville Sharp, Mr. Ramsay, Dr. Gregory, (who had written on the subject, as before mentioned,) and myself. At this meeting I read a paper, giving an account of the light I had collected in the course of my inquiries, with observations as well on the impolicy as on the wickedness of the trade. Many questions arose out of the reading of this little essay; many answers followed. Objections were started and canvassed. In short, this measure was found so useful, that certain other evenings as well as mornings were fixed upon for the same purpose.

On reporting my progress to my friends in the city, several of whom now assembled once in the week, as I mentioned before to have been agreed upon, and particularly on reporting the different meetings which had taken place at the house of Mr. Wilberforce on the subject, they were of opinion that the time was approach-

ing when we might unite, and that this union might prudently commence as soon as ever Mr. Wilberforce would give his word that he would take up the question in Parliament. Upon this I desired to observe, that though the latter gentleman had pursued the subject with much earnestness, he had never yet dropped the least hint that he would proceed so far in the matter, but I would take care that the question should be put to him, and I would bring them his answer.

In consequence of the promise I had now made, I went to Mr. Wilberforce. But when I saw him, I seemed unable to inform him of the object of my visit. Whether this inability arose from any sudden fear that his answer might not be favourable, or from a fear that I might possibly involve him in a long and arduous contest upon this subject, or whether it arose from an awful sense of the importance of the mission, as it related to the happiness of hundreds of thousands then alive, and of millions then unborn, I cannot say. But I had a feeling within me for which I could not account, and which seemed to hinder me from proceeding; and I actually went away without informing him of my errand.

In this situation I began to consider what to do, when I thought I would call upon Mr. Langton, tell him what had happened, and ask his advice. I found him at home. We consulted together. The result was, that he was to invite Mr. Wilberforce and some others to meet me at a dinner at his own house in two or three days, when he said he had no doubt of being able to procure an answer, by some means or other, to the question which I wished to have resolved.

On receiving a card from Mr. Langton, I went to dine with him. I found the party consist of Sir Charles Middleton, Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Hawkins Browne, Mr. Windham, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Mr. Boswell. The latter was then known as the friend of Dr. Johnson, and afterwards as the writer of his *Tour to the Hebrides*. After dinner the subject of the Slave Trade was purposely introduced. Many questions were put to me, and I dilated upon each in my answers, that I might inform and interest those present as much as I could. They seemed to be

greatly impressed with my account of the loss of seamen in the trade, and with the little samples of African cloth which I had procured for their inspection. Sir Joshua Reynolds gave his unqualified approbation of the abolition of this cruel traffic. Mr. Hawkins Browne joined heartily with him in sentiment; he spoke with much feeling upon it, and pronounced it to be barbarous, and contrary to every principle of morality and religion. Mr. Boswell, after saying the planters would urge that the Africans were made happier by being carried from their own country to the West Indies, observed, "Be it so. But we have no right to make people happy against their will." Mr. Windham, when it was suggested that the great importance of our West Indian islands, and the grandeur of Liverpool, would be brought against those who should propose the abolition of the Slave Trade, replied, "We have nothing to do with the policy of the measure. Rather let Liverpool and the islands be swallowed up in the sea, than this monstrous system of iniquity be carried on*." While such conversation was passing, and when all appeared to be interested in the cause, Mr. Langton put the question, about the proposal of which I had been so diffident, to Mr. Wilberforce, in the shape of a delicate compliment. The latter replied, that he had no objection to bring forward the measure in parliament when he was better prepared for it, and provided no person more proper could be found. Upon this, Mr. Hawkins Browne and Mr. Windham both said they would support him there. Before I left the company, I took Mr. Wilberforce aside, and asked him if I might mention this his resolution to those of my friends in the city, of whom he had often heard me speak, as desirous of aiding him by becoming a committee for the purpose. He replied, I might. I then asked Mr. Langton, privately, if he had any objection to belong to a society of which there might be a committee for the abolition of the Slave Trade. He said he should be pleased to become a

* I do not know upon what grounds, after such strong expressions, Mr. Boswell, in the next year, and Mr. Windham, after having supported the cause for three or four years, became inimical to it.

member of it. Having received these satisfactory answers, I returned home.

The next day, having previously taken down the substance of the conversation at the dinner, I went to James Phillips, and desired that our friends might be called together as soon as they conveniently could to hear my report. In the interim I wrote to Dr. Peckard, and waited upon Lord Scarsdale, Dr. Baker, and others, to know (supposing a society were formed for the abolition of the Slave Trade) if I might say they would belong to it. All of them replied in the affirmative, and desired me to represent them, if there should be any meeting for this purpose.

At the time appointed I met my friends. I read over the substance of the conversation which had taken place at Mr. Langton's. No difficulty occurred. All were unanimous for the formation of a committee. On the next day we met by agreement for this purpose. It was then resolved unanimously, among other things,—That the Slave Trade was both impolitic and unjust. It was resolved, also,—That the following persons be a committee for procuring such information and evidence, and publishing the same, as may tend to the abolition of the Slave Trade, and for directing the application of such moneys as have been already, and may hereafter be collected for the above purpose:—

Granville Sharp.	Thomas Clarkson,
William Dillwyn,	Richard Phillips.
Samuel Hoare,	John Barton,
George Harrison,	Joseph Hooper,
John Lloyd,	James Phillips,
Joseph Woods.	Philip Sansom.

All these were present. Granville Sharp, who stands at the head of the list, and who, as the father of the cause in England, was called to the chair, may be considered as representing the first class of forerunners and coadjutors, as it has been before described. The five next, of whom Samuel Hoare was chosen as the treasurer, were they who had been the committee of the second class, or of the Quakers in England, with the exception

of Dr. Knowles, who was then dying, but who, having heard of our meeting, sent a message to us to exhort us to proceed. The third class, or that of the Quakers in America, may be considered as represented by William Dillwyn, by whom they were afterwards joined to us in correspondence. The two who stand next, and in which I am included, may be considered as representing the fourth, most of the members of which we had been the means of raising. Thus, on the 22nd of May, 1787, the representatives of all the four classes, of which I have been giving a history from the year 1516, met together, and were united in that committee, to which I have been all along directing the attention of the reader; a committee, which, labouring afterwards with Mr. Wilberforce as a parliamentary head, did, under Providence, in the space of twenty years, contribute to put an end to a trade, which, measuring its magnitude by its crimes and sufferings, was the greatest practical evil that ever afflicted the human race.

After the formation of the committee*, notice was sent to Mr. Wilberforce of the event, and a friendship began, which has continued uninterruptedly between them, from that to the present day.

* All the members were of the society of the Quakers, except Mr. Sharp, Sansom, and myself. Joseph Gurney Bevan was present on the day before this meeting. He desired to belong to the society, but to be excused from belonging to the committee.

CHAPTER XI.

The preceding history of the different classes of the forerunners and coadjutors, to the time of the formation of the committee, collected into one view by means of a map.—Explanation of this map, and observations upon it.

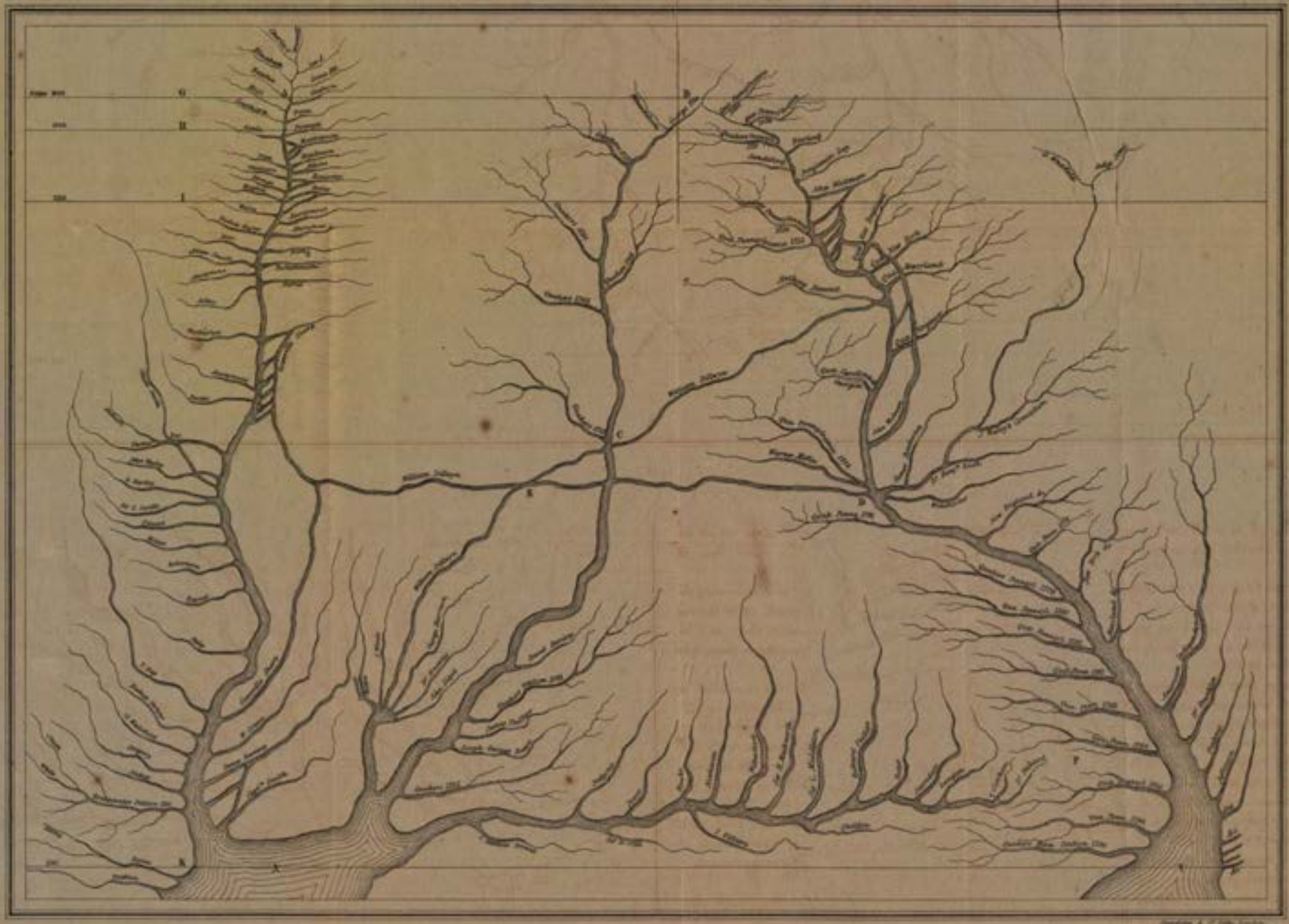
As the preceding history of the different classes of the forerunners and coadjutors, to the time of their junction, or to the formation of the committee, as just explained, may be thought interesting by many, I have endeavoured, by means of the annexed map, so to bring it before the reader, that he may comprehend the whole of it at a single view.

The figure beginning at A and reaching down to X represents the first class of forerunners and coadjutors up to the year 1787, as consisting of so many springs or rivulets, which assisted in making and swelling the torrent which swept away the Slave Trade.

The figure from B to C and from C to X represents the second class, or that of the Quakers in England, up to the same time. The stream on the right-hand represents them as a body, and that on the left the six individuals belonging to them, who formed the committee in 1783.

The figure from B to D represents the third class, or that of the Quakers in America when joined with others in 1774. The stream passing from D through E to X shows how this class was conveyed down, as it were, so as to unite with the second. That passing from D to Y shows its course in its own country, to its enlargement in 1787. And here I may observe, that as the different streams which formed a junction at X, were instrumental in producing the abolition of the Slave Trade in England, in the month of March, 1807, so those, whose effects are found united at Y, contributed to produce the same event in America, in the same month of the same year.

The figure from F to X represents the fourth class up to 1787.



x represents the junction of all the four classes in the committee instituted in London on the twenty-second day of May, 1787.

The parallel lines G, H, I, K, represent different periods of time, showing when the forerunners and coadjutors lived. The space between G and H includes the space of fifty years, in which we find but few labourers in this cause. That between H and I includes the same portion of time, in which we find them considerably increased, or nearly doubled. That between I and K represents the next thirty-seven years; but here we find their increase beyond all expectation, for we find four times more labourers in this short term, than in the whole of the preceding century.

In looking over the map, as thus explained, a number of thoughts suggested themselves, some of which it may not be improper to detail. And first, in looking between the first and second parallel, we perceive, that Morgan Godwyn, Richard Baxter, and George Fox, the first a clergyman of the established church, the second a divine at the head of the nonconformists, and the third the founder of the religious society of the Quakers, appeared each of them the first in his own class, and all of them about the same time, in behalf of the oppressed Africans. We see then this great truth first apparent, that the abolition of the Slave Trade took its rise, not from persons who set up a cry for liberty, when they were oppressors themselves, nor from persons who were led to it by ambition, or a love of reputation among men, but where it was most desirable, namely, from the teachers of Christianity in those times.

This account of its rise will furnish us with some important lessons. And first, it shows us the great value of religion. We see, when moral disorders become known, that the virtuous are they who rise up for the removal of them. Thus Providence seems to have appointed those who devote themselves most to his service, to the honourable office of becoming so many agents, under his influence, for the correction of the evils of life. And as this account of the rise of the abolition of the Slave Trade teaches us the necessity of a due cultivation of religion, so it

should teach us to have a brotherly affection for those, who, though they may differ from us in speculative opinions concerning it, do yet show by their conduct that they have a high reward for it. For though Godwyn, and Baxter, and Fox, differed as to the articles of their faith, we find them impelled by the spirit of Christianity, which is of infinitely more importance than a mere agreement in creeds, to the same good end.

In looking over the different streams in the map, as they are discoverable both in Europe and America, we are impressed with another truth on the same subject, which is, that the Christian religion is capable of producing the same good fruit in all lands. However men may differ on account of climate, or language, or government, or laws, or however they may be situated in different quarters of the globe, it will produce in them the same virtuous disposition, and make them instruments for the promotion of happiness in the world.

In looking between the two first parallels, where we see so few labourers, and in contemplating the great increase of these between the others, we are taught the consoling lesson, that however small the beginning and slow the progress may appear in any good work which we may undertake, we need not be discouraged as to the ultimate result of our labours; for though our cause may appear stationary, it may only become so, in order that it may take a deeper root, and thus be enabled to stand better against the storms which may afterwards beat about it.

In taking the same view again, we discover the manner in which light and information proceed under a free government in a good cause. An individual, for example, begins; he communicates his sentiments to others. Thus, while alive, he enlightens; when dead, he leaves his works behind him. Thus, though departed, he yet speaks, and his influence is not lost. Of those enlightened by him, some become authors, and others actors in their turn. While living, they instruct, like their predecessors; when dead, they speak also. Thus a number of dead persons are encouraging us in libraries, and a number of living are conversing and diffusing zeal among us at the same time. This, however, is not true in any free and enlightened country, with respect to the

propagation of evil. The living find no permanent encouragement, and the dead speak to no purpose in such a case.

This account of the manner in which light and information proceed in a free country, furnishes us with some valuable knowledge. It shows us, first, the great importance of education; for all they who can read may become enlightened. They may gain as much from the dead as from the living. They may see the sentiments of former ages. Thus they may contract, by degrees, habits of virtuous inclination, and become fitted to join with others in the removal of any of the evils of life.

It shows us, secondly, how that encouraging maxim may become true, That no good effort is ever lost. For if he, who makes the virtuous attempt, should be prevented by death from succeeding in it, can he not speak, though in the tomb? Will not his works still breathe his sentiments upon it? May not the opinions, and the facts, which he has recorded, meet the approbation of ten thousand readers, of whom it is probable, in the common course of things, that some will branch out of him as authors, and others as actors or labourers, in the same cause?

And, lastly, it will show us the difficulty (if any attempt should be made) of reversing permanently the late noble act of the legislature for the abolition of the Slave Trade. For let us consider how many, both of the living and the dead, could be made to animate us. Let us consider, too, that this is the cause of mercy, justice, and religion; that as such, it will always afford renewed means of rallying; and that the dead will always be heard with interest, and the living with enthusiasm upon it.

CHAPTER XII.

Author devotes this chapter to considerations relative to himself; fears that by the frequent introduction of himself to the notice of the reader he may incur the charge of ostentation.—Observations on such a charge.

HAVING brought my history of the abolition of the Slave Trade up to the month of May 1787, I purpose taking the liberty, before I proceed with it, to devote this chapter to considerations relative to myself. This, indeed, seems to be now necessary; for I have been fearful for some pages past, and, indeed, from the time when I began to introduce myself to the notice of the reader, as one of the forerunners and coadjutors in this great cause, that I might appear to have put myself into a situation too prominent, so as even to have incurred the charge of ostentation. But if there should be some who, in consequence of what they have already read of this history, should think thus unfavourably of me, what must their opinion ultimately be, when, unfortunately, I must become still more prominent in it! Nor do I know in what manner I shall escape their censure: for if, to avoid egotism, I should write, as many have done, in the third person, what would this profit me? The delicate situation, therefore, in which I feel myself to be placed, makes me desirous of saying a few words to the reader on this subject.

And first, I may observe, that several of my friends urged me from time to time, and this long before the abolition of the Slave Trade had been effected, to give a history of the rise and progress of the attempt, as far as it had been then made; but I uniformly resisted their application.

When the question was decided last year, they renewed their request. They represented to me, that no person knew the beginning and progress of this great work so well as myself; that it was a pity that such knowledge should die with me; that such a history would be useful; that it would promote good feelings among men; that it would urge them to benevolent exertions; that it would supply them with hope in the midst of these; that it would teach them many valuable lessons;—these and other things were said to me. But, encouraging as they were, I never

lost sight of the objection, which is the subject of this chapter; nor did I ever fail to declare, that though, considering the part I had taken in this great cause, I might be qualified better than some others, yet it was a task too delicate for me to perform. I always foresaw that I could not avoid making myself too prominent an object in such a history, and that I should be liable, on that account, to the suspicion of writing it for the purpose of sounding my own praise.

With this objection my friends were not satisfied. They answered, that I might treat the History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade as a species of biography, or as the history of a part of my own life: that people, who had much less weighty matters to communicate, wrote their own histories; and that no one charged them with vanity for so doing.

I own I was not convinced by this answer. I determined, however, in compliance with their wishes, to examine the objection more minutely, and to see if I could overcome it more satisfactorily to my own mind. With this view, I endeavoured to anticipate the course which such a history would take. I saw clearly, in the first place, that there were times, for months together, when the committee for the abolition of the Slave Trade was labouring without me, and when I myself for an equal space of time was labouring in distant parts of the kingdom without them. Hence I perceived that, if my own exertions were left out, there would be repeated chasms in this history; and, indeed, that it could not be completed without the frequent mention of myself. And I was willing to hope that this would be so obvious to the good sense of the reader, that if he should think me vainglorious in the early part of it, he would afterwards, when he advanced in the perusal of it, acquit me of such a charge. This consideration was the first which removed my objection on this head. That there can be no ground for any charge of ostentation, as far as the origin of this history is concerned, so I hope to convince him there can be none, by showing him in what light I have always viewed myself in connexion with the committee, to which I have had the honour to belong.

I have uniformly considered our committee for the abolition of the Slave Trade, as we usually consider the human body,

that is, as made up of a head and of various members which had different offices to perform. Thus, if one man was an eye, another was an ear, another an arm, and another a foot. And here I may say, with great truth, that I believe no committee was ever made up of persons, whose varied talents were better adapted to the work before them. Viewing then the committee in this light, and myself as in connexion with it, I may deduce those truths, with which the analogy will furnish me. And first, it will follow, that if every member has performed his office faithfully, though one may have done something more than another, yet no one of them in particular has any reason to boast. With what propriety could the foot, though in the execution of its duty it had become weary, say to the finger, "Thou hast done less than I;" when the finger could reply with truth, "I have done all that has been given me to do?" It will follow, also, that as every limb is essentially necessary for the completion of a perfect work; so in the case before us, every one was as necessary in his own office, or department, as another. For what, for example, could I myself have done if I had not derived so much assistance from the committee? What could Mr. Wilberforce have done in Parliament, if I, on the other hand, had not collected that great body of evidence, to which there was such a constant appeal? And what could the committee have done without the parliamentary aid of Mr. Wilberforce? And in mentioning this necessity of distinct offices and talents for the accomplishment of the great work, in which we have been all of us engaged, I feel myself bound by the feelings of justice to deliver it as my opinion in this place, (for, perhaps, I may have no other opportunity,) that knowing, as I have done, so many members of both houses of our legislature, for many of whom I have had a sincere respect, there was never yet one, who appeared to me to be so properly qualified, in all respects, for the management of the great cause of the abolition of the Slave Trade, as he, whose name I have just mentioned. His connexions, but more particularly his acquaintance with the first minister of state, were of more service in the promotion of it, than they, who are but little acquainted with political movements, can well appreciate. His habits also of diligent and persevering inquiry made him master

of all the knowledge that was requisite for conducting it. His talents both in and out of parliament made him a powerful advocate in its favour. His character, free from the usual spots of human imperfection, gave an appropriate lustre to the cause, making it look yet more lovely, and enticing others to its support. But most of all the motive, on which he undertook it, insured its progress. For this did not originate in views of selfishness, or of party or of popular applause, but in an awful sense of his duty as a Christian. It was this which gave him alacrity and courage in his pursuit. It was this which made him continue in his elevated situation of a legislator, though it was unfavourable, if not to his health, at least to his ease and comfort. It was this which made him incorporate this great object among the pursuits of his life, so that it was daily in his thoughts. It was this which, when year after year of unsuccessful exertion returned, occasioned him to be yet fresh and vigorous in spirit, and to persevere till the day of triumph.

But to return:—There is yet another consideration, which I shall offer to the reader on this subject, and with which I shall conclude it. It is this; that no one ought to be accused of vanity until he has been found to assume to himself some extraordinary merit. This being admitted, I shall now freely disclose the view, which I have always been desirous of taking of my own conduct on this occasion, in the following words:—

As Robert Barclay, the apologist for the Quakers, when he dedicated his work to Charles the Second, intimated to this prince, that any merit which the work might have, would not be derived from his patronage of it, but from the Author of all spiritual good; so I say to the reader, with respect to myself, that I disclaim all praise on account of any part I may have taken in the promotion of this great cause, for that I am desirious above all things to attribute my best endeavours in it to the influence of a superior Power; of Him, I mean, who gave me a heart to feel—who gave me courage to begin—and perseverance to proceed—and that I am thankful to Him, and this with the deepest feeling of gratitude and humility, for having permitted me to become useful, in any degree, to my fellow-creatures.

CHAPTER XIII.

Author returns to his History.—Committee formed as before-mentioned; its proceedings.—Author produces a summary view of the Slave Trade, and of the probable consequences of its abolition.—Wrongs of Africa, by Mr. Roscoe, generously presented to the committee.—Important discussion as to the object of the committee.—Emancipation declared to be no part of it.—Committee decides on its public title.—Author requested to go to Bristol, Liverpool, and Lancaster, to collect further information on the subject of the trade.

I RETURN now, after this long digression, to the continuation of my history.

It was shown in the latter part of the tenth chaptor, that twelve individuals, all of whom were then named, met together by means which no one could have foreseen, on the 22d of May, 1787; and that, after having voted the Slave Trade to be both unjust and impolitic, they formed themselves into a committee for procuring such information and evidence, and for publishing the same, as might tend to the abolition of it, and for directing the application of such money as had been already, and might hereafter be collected for that purpose. At this meeting it was resolved also, that no less than three members should form a quorum; that Samuel Hoare should be the treasurer; that the treasurer should pay no money but by order of the committee; and that copies of these resolutions should be printed and circulated, in which it should be inserted that the subscriptions of all such as were willing to forward the plans of the committee should be received by the treasurer or any member of it.

On the 24th of May the committee met again to promote the object of its institution.

The treasurer reported at this meeting, that the subscriptions already received amounted to one hundred and thirty-six pounds.

As I had foreseen long before this time that my *Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* was too large for general circulation, and yet that a general circulation of know-

ledge on this subject was absolutely necessary, I determined directly after the formation of the committee to write a short pamphlet consisting only of eight or ten pages for this purpose. I called it *A Summary View of the Slave Trade, and of the probable consequences of its Abolition.* It began by exhibiting to the reader the various unjustifiable ways in which persons living on the coast of Africa became slaves. It then explained the treatment which these experienced on their passage, the number dying in the course of it, and the treatment of the survivors in the colonies of those nations to which they were carried. It then announced the speedy publication of a work on the impolicy of the trade, the contents of which, as far as I could then see, I gave generally under the following heads :—Part the first, it was said, would show that Africa was capable of offering to us a trade in its own natural productions as well as in the persons of men; that the trade in the persons of men was profitable but to a few; that its value was diminished from many commercial considerations; that it was also highly destructive to our seamen; and that the branch of it, by which we supplied the island of St. Domingo with slaves, was peculiarly impolitic on that account. Part the second, it was said, would show that if the slaves were kindly treated in our colonies, they would increase; that the abolition of the trade would necessarily secure such a treatment to them, and that it would produce many other advantages which would be then detailed.

This little piece I presented to the committee at this their second meeting. It was then duly read and examined; and the result was, that after some little correction it was approved, and that two thousand copies of it were ordered to be printed, with lists of the subscribers and of the committee, and to be sent to various parts of the kingdom.

On June the 7th, the committee met again for the despatch of business, when, among other things, they voted their thanks to Dr. Baker, of Lower Grosvenor-street, who had been one of my first assistants, for his services to the cause.

At this committee John Barton, one of the members of it, stated that he was commissioned by the author of a poem,

entitled *The Wrongs of Africa*, to offer the profits which might arise from the sale of that work, to the committee, for the purpose of enabling them to pursue the object of their institution. This circumstance was not only agreeable, inasmuch as it showed us that there were others who felt with us for the injured Africans, and who were willing to aid us in our designs, but it was rendered still more so when we were given to understand that the poem was written by Mr. Roscoe, of Liverpool, and the preface to it by the late Dr. Currie, who then lived in the same place. To find friends to our cause rising up from a quarter where we expected scarcely anything but opposition, was very consolatory and encouraging. As this poem was well written, but cannot now be had, I shall give the introductory part of it, which is particularly beautiful, to the perusal of the reader. It begins thus:—

Offspring of Love divine, Humanity!
To whom, his eldest born, th' Eternal gave
Dominion o'er the heart; and taught to touch
Its varied stops in sweetest unison;
And strike the string that from a kindred breast
Responsive vibrates! from the noisy haunts
Of mercantile confusion, where thy voice
Is heard not; from the meretricious glare
Of crowded theatres, where in thy place
Sits Sensibility, with wat'ry eye,
Dropping o'er fancied woes her useless tear;
Come thou, and weep with me substantial ills;
And execrate the wrongs that Afric's sons,
Torn from their natal shore, and doom'd to bear
The yoke of servitude in foreign climes,
Sustain. Nor vainly let our sorrows flow,
Nor let the strong emotion rise in vain;
But may the kind contagion widely spread,
Till in its flame the unrelenting heart
Of avarice melt in softest sympathy—
And one bright blaze of universal love
In grateful incense rises up to Heaven!

Form'd with the same capacity of pain,
The same desire of pleasure and of ease,
Why feels not man for man! When nature shrinks
From the slight puncture of an insect's sting,
Faints, if not screen'd from sultry suns, and pines
Beneath the hardship of an hour's delay

Of needful nutriment;—when liberty
Is priz'd so dearly, that the slightest breath
That ruffles but her mantle, can awake
To arms unwarlike nations, and can rouse
Confed'rate states to vindicate her claims:—
How shall the suff'rer man his fellow doom
To ills he mourns and spurns at; tear with stripes
His quiv'ring flesh; with hunger and with thirst
Waste his emaciate frame; in ceaseless toils
Exhaust his vital powers; and bind his limbs
In galling chains! Shall he, whose fragile form
Demands continual blessings to support
Its complicated texture, air, and food,
Raiment, alternate rest, and kindly skies,
And healthful seasons, dare with impious voice
To ask those mercies, whilst his selfish aim
Arrests the general freedom of their course;
And, gratified beyond his utmost wish,
Debars another from the bounteous store?

In this manner was the subject of this beautiful poem introduced to the notice of the public. But I have no room for any further extracts, nor time to make any further comment upon it. I can only add, that the committee were duly sensible as well of its merits, as of the virtuous and generous disposition of the author, and that they requested John Barton to thank him in an appropriate manner for his offer, which he was to say they accepted gratefully.

At this sitting, at which ten members were present out of the twelve, a discussion unexpectedly arose on a most important subject. The committee, finding that their meetings began to be approved by many, and that the cause under their care was likely to spread, and foreseeing, also, the necessity there would soon be of making themselves known as a public body throughout the kingdom, thought it right that they should assume some title, which should be a permanent one, and which should be expressive of their future views. This gave occasion to them to reconsider the object for which they had associated, and to fix and define it in such a manner that there should be no misunderstanding about it in the public mind. In looking into the subject, it appeared to them that there were two evils quite distinct from each other, which it might become their duty to endeavour

to remove. The first was the evil of the Slave Trade, in consequence of which many thousand persons were every year fraudulently and forcibly taken from their country, their relations and friends, and from all that they esteemed valuable in life. The second was the evil of slavery itself, in consequence of which the same persons were forced into a situation where they were deprived of the rights of men, where they were obliged to linger out their days subject to excessive labour and cruel punishments, and where their children were to inherit the same hard lot. Now the question was, which of the two evils the committee should select as that to which they should direct their attention with a view of the removal of it; or whether, with the same view, it should direct its attention to both of them.

It appeared soon to be the sense of the committee, that to aim at the removal of both, would be to aim at too much, and that by doing this we might lose all.

The question then was, which of the two they were to take as their object? Now, in considering this question, it appeared that it did not matter where they began, or which of them they took, as far as the end to be produced was the thing desired. For first, if the Slave Trade should be really abolished, the bad usage of the slaves in the colonies, that is, the hard part of their slavery, if not the slavery itself, would fall. For the planters and others being unable to procure more slaves from the coast of Africa, it would follow directly, whenever this great event should take place, that they must treat those better whom they might then have. They must render marriage honourable among them. They must establish the union of one man with one wife. They must give the pregnant women more indulgences. They must pay more attention to the rearing of their offspring. They must work and punish the adults with less rigour. Now it was to be apprehended that they could not do these things, without seeing the political advantages which would arise to themselves from so doing; and that, reasoning upon this, they might be induced to go on to give them greater indulgences, rights, and privileges, in time. But how would every such successive improvement of their condition operate, but to bring them nearer to the state of

freemen? In the same manner it was contended, that the better treatment of the slaves in the colonies, or that the emancipation of them there, when fit for it, would of itself lay the foundation for the abolition of the Slave Trade. For if the slaves were kindly treated, that is, if marriage were encouraged among them; if the infants who should be born were brought up with care; if the sick were properly attended to; if the young and the adult were well fed and properly clothed, and not over-worked, and not worn down by the weight of severe punishments, they would necessarily increase, and this on an extensive scale. But if the planters were thus to get their labourers from the births on their own estates, then the Slave Trade would in time be no longer necessary to them, and it would die away as an useless and a noxious plant. Thus it was of no consequence, which of the two evils the committee were to select as the object for their labours; for, as far as the end in view only was concerned, that the same end would be produced in either case.

But in looking further into this question, it seemed to make a material difference which of the two they selected, as far as they had in view the due execution of any laws, which might be made respecting them, and their own prospect of success in the undertaking. For, by aiming at the abolition of the Slave Trade, they were laying the axe at the very root. By doing this, and this only, they would not incur the objection, that they were meddling with the property of the planters, and letting loose an irritated race of beings, who, in consequence of all the vices and infirmities which a state of slavery entails upon those who undergo it, were unfit for their freedom. By asking the government of the country to do this, and this only, they were asking for that which it had an indisputable right to do; namely, to regulate or abolish any of its branches of commerce: whereas it was doubtful, whether it could interfere with the management of the internal affairs of the colonies, or whether this was not wholly the province of the legislatures established there. By asking the government, again, to do this, and this only, they were asking what it could really enforce. It could station its ships of war, and command its custom-houses, so as to carry any act of this

kind into effect. But it could not insure that an act to be observed in the heart of the islands should be enforced*. To this it was added, that if the committee were to fix upon the annihilation of slavery as the object for their labours, the Slave Trade would not fall so speedily as it would by a positive law for the abolition; because, though the increase from the births might soon supply all the estates now in cultivation with labourers, yet new plantations might be opened from time to time in different islands, so that no period could be fixed upon, when it could be said that it would cease.

Impressed by these arguments, the committee were clearly of opinion, that they should define their object to be the abolition of the Slave Trade, and not of the slavery which sprung from it. Hence from this time, and in allusion to the month when this discussion took place, they styled themselves in their different advertisements, and reports, though they were first associated in the month of May, The Committee instituted in June, 1787, for effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Thus, at the very outset, they took a ground which was for ever tenable. Thus they were enabled also to answer the objection, which was afterwards so constantly and so industriously circulated against them, that they were going to emancipate the slaves. And I have no doubt that this wise decision contributed greatly to their success; for I am persuaded that, if they had adopted the other object, they could not for years to come, if ever, have succeeded in their attempt.

Before the committee broke up, I represented to them the necessity there was of obtaining further knowledge on all those individual points which might be said to belong to the great subject of the abolition of the Slave Trade. In the first place, this knowledge was necessary for me, if I were to complete my work on *The Impolicy of this Trade*, which work, the *Summary View*, just printed, had announced to the world. It would be

* The late correspondence of the governors of our colonies with Lord Camden in his official situation, but particularly the statements made by Lord Seaforth and General Prevost, have shown the wisdom of this remark, and that no dependence was to be had for the better usage of the slaves but upon the total abolition of the trade.

necessary, also, in case the Slave Trade should become a subject of parliamentary inquiry; for this inquiry could not proceed without evidence. And if any time was peculiarly fit for the procuring of such information or evidence, it was the present. At this time the passions of men had not been heated by any public agitation of the question, nor had interest felt itself biassed to conceal the truth. But as soon as ever it should be publicly understood, that a parliamentary inquiry was certain, (which we ourselves believed would be the case, but which interested men did not then know,) we should find many of the avenues to information closed against us. I proposed, therefore, that some one of the committee should undertake a journey to Bristol, Liverpool, and Lancaster, where he should reside for a time to collect further light upon this subject; and that if others should feel their occupations or engagements to be such as would make such a journey unsuitable, I would undertake it myself. I begged, therefore, the favour of the different members of the committee, to turn the matter over in their minds by the next meeting, that we might then talk over and decide upon the propriety of the measure.

The committee held its fourth meeting on the 12th of June. Among the subjects which were then brought forward, was that of the journey before mentioned. The propriety, and indeed, even the necessity, of it was so apparent, that I was requested by all present to undertake it, and a minute for that purpose was entered upon our records. Of this journey, as gradually unfolding light on the subject, and as peculiarly connected with the promotion of our object, I shall now give an account; after which I shall return to the proceedings of the committee.

CHAPTER XIV.

Author arrives at Bristol; introduction to Quaker families there.—Objects of his inquiry.—Ill usage of seamen on board the ship Brothers.—Obtains a knowledge of several articles of African produce.—Dr. Camplin; Dean Tucker; Mr. Henry Sulgar.—Procures an authenticated account of the treacherous massacre at Calabar.—Ill usage of the seamen of the ship Alfred.—Painful feelings of the author on this occasion.

Having made preparations for my journey, I took my leave of the different individuals of the committee. I called upon Mr. Wilberforce, also, with the same design. He was then very ill, and in bed; Sir Richard Hill and others were sitting by his bedside. After conversing as much as he well could in his weak state, he held out his hand to me and wished me success. When I left him I felt much dejected; it appeared to me as if it would be in this case, as it is often in that of other earthly things, that we scarcely possess what we repute a treasure when it is taken from us.

I determined to take this journey on horseback, not only on account of the relaxed state in which I found myself, after such close and constant application, but because I wished to have all my time to myself upon the road, in order the better to reflect upon the proper means of promoting this great cause. The first place I resolved to visit was Bristol; accordingly I directed my course thither. On turning a corner, within about a mile of that city, at about eight in the evening, I came within sight of it. The weather was rather hazy, which occasioned it to look of unusual dimensions. The bells of some of the churches were then ringing; the sound of them did not strike me till I had turned the corner before mentioned, when it came upon me at once; it filled me, almost directly, with a melancholy for which I could not account. I began now to tremble, for the first time, at the arduous task I had undertaken, of attempting to subvert one of the branches of the commerce of the great place which was then before me. I began to think of the host of people I should

have to encounter in it; I anticipated much persecution in it also; and I questioned whether I should even get out of it alive. But in journeying on I became more calm and composed; my spirits began to return. In these latter moments I considered my first feelings as useful, inasmuch as they impressed upon me the necessity of extraordinary courage, and activity, and perseverance, and of watchfulness, also, over my own conduct, that I might not throw any stain upon the cause I had undertaken. When, therefore, I entered the city, I entered it with an undaunted spirit, determining that no labour should make me shrink, nor danger, nor even persecution, deter me from my pursuit.

My first introduction was by means of a letter to Harry Gandy, who had then become one of the religious society of the Quakers. This introduction to him was particularly useful to me, for he had been a seafaring man. In his early youth he had been of a roving disposition; and, in order to see the world, had been two voyages in the Slave Trade, so that he had known the nature and practices of it. This enabled him to give me much useful information on the subject; and as he had frequently felt, as he grew up, deep affliction of mind for having been concerned in it, he was impelled to forward my views as much as possible, under an idea that he should be thus making some reparation for the indiscreet and profane occupations of his youth.

I was also introduced to the families of James Harford, John Lury, Matthew Wright, Philip Debell Tucket, Thomas Bonville, and John Waring; all of whom were of the same religious society. I gained an introduction, also, soon afterwards, to George Fisher. These were my first and only acquaintance at Bristol for some time; I derived assistance in the promotion of my object from all of them; and it is a matter of pleasing reflection, that the friendships then formed have been kept alive to the present time.

The objects I had marked down as those to be attended to were—to ascertain what were the natural productions of Africa, and, if possible, to obtain specimens of them, with the view of forming a cabinet or collection—to procure as much information as I could relative to the manner of obtaining slaves on the con-

tinent of Africa, of transporting them to the West Indies, and of treating them there—to prevail upon persons, having a knowledge of any or all of these circumstances, to come forward to be examined as evidences before parliament, if such an examination should take place—to make myself still better acquainted with the loss of seamen in the Slave Trade—also with the loss of those who were employed in the other trades from the same port—to know the nature, and quantity, and value of the imports and exports of goods in the former case:—there were some other objects which I classed under the head of miscellaneous.

In my first movements about this city, I found that people talked very openly on the subject of the Slave Trade. They seemed to be well acquainted with the various circumstances belonging to it. There were facts, in short, in every body's mouth concerning it; and every body seemed to execrate it, though no one thought of its abolition. In this state of things I perceived that my course was obvious; for I had little else to do, in pursuing two or three of my objects, than to trace the foundation of those reports which were in circulation.

On the third of July I heard that the ship Brothers*, then lying in King's Road for Africa, could not get her seamen, and that a party which had been put on board, becoming terrified by the prospect of their situation, had left her on Sunday morning. On inquiring further, I found that those who had navigated her on her last voyage, thirty-two of whom had died, had been so dreadfully used by the captain, that he could not get hands in the present. It was added, that the treatment of seamen was a crying evil in this trade, and that consequently few would enter into it, so that there was at all times a great difficulty in procuring them, though they were ready enough to enter into other trades.

The relation of these circumstances made me acquainted with two things, of which I had not before heard; namely, the aversion of seamen to engage, and the bad usage of them when engaged in

* I abstain from mentioning the names of the captain of this or of other vessels, lest the recording of them should give pain to relatives who can have had no share in their guilt.

this cruel trade; into both which I determined immediately to inquire.

I conceived that it became me to be very cautious about giving ear too readily to reports; and therefore, as I could easily learn the truth of one of the assertions which had been made to me, I thought it prudent to ascertain this, and to judge, by the discovery I should make concerning it, what degree of credit might be due to the rest. Accordingly, by means of my late friend, Truman Harford, the eldest son of the respectable family of that name, to which I have already mentioned myself to have been introduced, I gained access to the muster-roll of the ship Brothers. On looking over the names of her last crew, I found the melancholy truth confirmed, that thirty-two of them had been placed among the dead.

Having ascertained this circumstance, I became eager to inquire into the truth of the others, but more particularly of the treatment of one of the seamen, which, as it was reported to me, exceeded all belief. His name was John Dean; he was a black man, but free. The report was, that for a trifling circumstance, for which he was in no-wise to blame, the captain had fastened him with his belly to the deck, and that, in this situation, he had poured hot pitch upon his back, and made incisions in it with hot tongs.

Before however I attempted to learn the truth of this barbarous proceeding, I thought I would look into the ship's muster-roll, to see if I could find the name of such a man. On examination I found it to be the last on the list. John Dean, it appeared, had been one of the original crew, having gone on board, from Bristol, on the twenty-second day of July, 1785.

On inquiring where Dean was to be found, my informant told me that he had lately left Bristol for London. I was shown, however, to the house where he had lodged. The name of his landlord was Donovan. On talking with him on the subject, he assured me that the report I had heard was true; for that while he resided with him he had heard an account of his usage from some of his ship-mates, and that he had often looked at his scarred and mutilated back.

On inquiring of Donovan if any other person in Bristol could corroborate this account, he referred me to a reputable tradesman living in the Market-place. Having been introduced to him, he told me that he had long known John Dean to be a sober and industrious man; that he had seen the terrible indentures on his back; and that they were said to have been made by the captain, in the manner related, during his last voyage.

While I was investigating this matter further, I was introduced to Mr. Sydenham Teast, a respectable ship-builder in Bristol, and the owner of vessels trading to Africa in the natural productions of that country. I mentioned to him by accident what I had heard relative to the treatment of John Dean. He said it was true. An attorney* in London had then taken up his cause, in consequence of which the captain had been prevented from sailing till he could find persons who would be answerable for the damages which might be awarded against him in a court of law. Mr. Teast further said, that, not knowing at that time the cruelty of the transaction to its full extent, he himself had been one of the securities for the captain at the request of the purser† of the ship. Finding, however, afterwards, that it was as the public had stated, he was sorry that he had ever interfered in such a barbarous case.

This transaction, which I now believed to be true, had the effect of preparing me for crediting whatever I might hear concerning the barbarities said to be practised in this trade. It kindled also a fire of indignation within me, and produced in me both anxiety and spirit to proceed. But that which excited these feelings the most, was the consideration that the purser of this ship, knowing, as he did, of this act of cruelty, should have sent out this monster again. This, I own, made me think that there was a system of bad usage to be deliberately practised upon the

* I afterwards found out this attorney. He described the transaction to me, as, by report, it had taken place, and informed me that he had made the captain of the Brothers pay for his barbarity.

† The purser of a ship, at Bristol, is the person who manages the outfit, as well as the trade, and who is often in part owner of her.

seamen in this employment, for some purpose or other which I could then neither comprehend nor ascertain.

But while I was in pursuit of this one object, I was not unmindful of the others which I had marked out for myself. I had already procured an interview, as I have mentioned, with Mr. Sydenham Teast. I had done this with a view of learning from him what were the different productions of the continent of Africa, as far as he had been able to ascertain from the imports by his own vessels. He was very open and communicative. He had imported ivory, red-wood, cam-wood, and gum-copal. He purposed to import palm-oil. He observed that bees'-wax might be collected, also, upon the coast. Of his gum-copal he gave me a specimen. He furnished me, also, with two different specimens of unknown woods, which had the appearance of being useful. One of his captains, he informed me, had been told by the natives, that cotton, pink in the pod, grew in their country. He was of opinion, that many valuable productions might be found upon this continent.

Mr. Biggs, to whom I gained an introduction also, was in a similar trade with Mr. Teast; that is, he had one or two vessels which skimmed, as it were, the coast and rivers for what they could get of the produce of Africa, without having any concern in the trade for slaves. Mr. Biggs gave me a specimen of gum Senegal, of yellow-wood, and of Malaguetta and Cayenne pepper. He gave me, also, small pieces of cloth made and dyed by the natives, the colours of which they could only have obtained from materials in their own country. Mr. Biggs seemed to be assured that, if proper persons were sent to Africa on discovery, they would fine a rich mine of wealth in the natural productions of it, and in none more advantageous to this as a manufacturing nation, than in the many beautiful dyes which it might furnish.

From Thomas Bonville I collected two specimens of cloth made by the natives; and from others a beautiful piece of tulip-wood, a small piece of wood similar to mahogany, and a sample of fine rice, all of which had been brought from the same continent.

Among the persons whom I found out at Bristol, and from

whom I derived assistance, were Dr. Camplin and the celebrated Dean Tucker. The former was my warm defender; for the West Indian and African merchants, as soon as they discovered my errand, began to calumniate me. The dean, though in a very advanced age, felt himself much interested in my pursuit. He had long moved in the political world himself, and was desirous of hearing of what was going forward that was new in it, but particularly about so desirable a measure as that of the abolition of the Slave Trade*. He introduced me to the Custom House at Bristol. He used to call upon me at the Merchants' Hall, while I was transcribing the muster-rolls of the seamen there. In short, he seemed to be interested in all my movements. He became, also, a warm supporter both of me and of my cause.

Among others who were useful to me in my pursuit, was Mr. Henry Sulgar, an amiable minister of the gospel, belonging to the religious society of the Moravians in the same city. From him I first procured authentic documents relative to the treacherous massacre at Calabar. This cruel transaction had been frequently mentioned to me; but as it had taken place twenty years before, I could not find one person who had been engaged in it, nor could I come, in a satisfactory manner, at the various particulars belonging to it. My friend, however, put me in possession of copies of the real depositions which had been taken in the case of the king against Lippincott and others relative to this event; namely, of Captain Floyd, of the city of Bristol, who had been a witness to the scene, and of Ephraim Robin John, and of Ancona Robin Robin John, two African chiefs, who had been sufferers by it. These depositions had been taken before Jacob Kirby and Thomas Symons, esquires, commissioners at Bristol for taking affidavits in the Court of King's Bench. The tragedy, of which they gave a circumstantial account, I shall present to the reader in as concise a manner as I can.

In the year 1767, the ships Indian Queen, Duke of York,

* Dean Tucker, in his *Reflections on the Disputes between Great Britain and Ireland*, published in 1785, had passed a severe censure on the British planters for the inhuman treatment of their slaves.

Nancy, and Concord, of Bristol; the Edgar, of Liverpool; and the Canterbury, of London; lay in Old Calabar river.

It happened, at this time, that a quarrel subsisted between the principal inhabitants of Old Town and those of New Town, Old Calabar, which had originated in a jealousy respecting slaves. The captains of the vessels now mentioned, joined in sending several letters to the inhabitants of Old Town, but particularly to Ephraim Robin John, who was at that time a grandee, or principal inhabitant of the place. The tenor of these letters was, that they were sorry that any jealousy or quarrel should subsist between the two parties; that if the inhabitants of Old Town would come on board, they would afford them security and protection; adding, at the same time, that their intention in inviting them was, that they might become mediators, and thus heal their disputes.

The inhabitants of Old Town, happy to find that their differences were likely to be accommodated, joyfully accepted the invitation. The three brothers of the grandee just mentioned, the eldest of whom was Amboe Robin John, first entered their canoe, attended by twenty-seven others, and, being followed by nine canoes, directed their course to the Indian Queen. They were despatched from thence the next morning to the Edgar, and afterwards to the Duke of York, on board of which they went, leaving their canoe and attendants by the side of the same vessel. In the mean time, the people on board the other canoes were either distributed on board, or lying close to, the other ships.

This being the situation of the three brothers, and of the principal inhabitants of the place, the treachery now began to appear. The crew of the Duke of York, aided by the captain and mates, and armed with pistols and cutlasses, rushed into the cabin, with an intent to seize the persons of their three innocent and unsuspicious guests. The unhappy men, alarmed at this violation of the rights of hospitality, and struck with astonishment at the behaviour of their supposed friends, attempted to escape through the cabin windows; but, being wounded, were obliged to desist, and to submit to be put in irons.

In the same moment in which this atrocious attempt had

been made, an order had been given to fire upon the canoe, which was then lying by the side of the Duke of York. The canoe soon filled and sunk, and the wretched attendants were either seized, killed, or drowned. Most of the other ships followed the example. Great numbers were additionally killed and drowned on the occasion, and others were swimming to the shore.

At this juncture, the inhabitants of New Town, who had concealed themselves in the bushes by the water-side, and between whom and the commanders of the vessels the plan had been previously concerted, came out from their hiding-places, and, embarking in their canoes, made for such as were swimming from the fire of the ships. The ships' boats, also, were manned, and joined in the pursuit. They butchered the greatest part of those whom they caught. Many dead bodies were soon seen upon the sands, and others were floating upon the water; and including those who were seized and carried off, and those who were drowned and killed, either by the firing of the ships or by the people of New Town, three hundred were lost to the inhabitants of Old Town on that day.

The carnage which I have been now describing was scarcely over, when a canoe, full of the principal people of New Town, who had been the promoters of the scheme, dropped along-side of the Duke of York. They demanded the person of Amboe Robin John, the brother of the grandee of Old Town, and the eldest of the three on board. The unfortunate man put the palms of his hands together, and beseeched the commander of the vessel that he would not violate the rights of hospitality, by giving up an unoffending stranger to his enemies. But no entreaties could avail. The commander received from the New Town people a slave of the name of Econg in his stead, and then forced him into the canoe, where his head was immediately struck off in the sight of the crew, and of his afflicted and disconsolate brothers. As for them, they escaped his fate; but they were carried off with their attendants to the West Indies, and sold for slaves.

The knowledge of this tragical event now fully confirmed me in the sentiment, that the hearts of those who were concerned in this traffic became unusually hardened, and that I might

readily believe any atrocities, however great, which might be related of them. It made also my blood boil, as it were, within me: it gave a new spring to my exertions; and I rejoiced, sorrowful as I otherwise was, that I had visited Bristol, if it had been only to gain an accurate statement of this one fact.

In pursuing my objects, I found that reports were current, that the crew of the Alfred slave-vessel, which had just returned, had been barbarously used, but particularly a young man of the name of Thomas, who had served as the surgeon's mate on board her. The report was, that he had been repeatedly knocked down by the captain; that he had become in consequence of his ill usage so weary of his life, that he had three times jumped over board to destroy it; that on being taken up the last time he had been chained to the deck of the ship, in which situation he had remained night and day for some time; that in conseqnence of this his health had been greatly impaired; and that it was supposed he could not long survive this treatment.

It was with great difficulty, notwithstanding all my inquiries, that I could trace this person. I discovered him, however, at last. He was confined to his bed when I saw him, and appeared to me to be delirious. I could collect nothing from himself relative to the particulars of his treatment. In his intervals of sense, he exclaimed against the cruelty both of the captain and of the chief mate, and pointing to his legs, thighs, and body, which were all wrapped up in flannel, he endeavoured to convince me how much he had suffered there. At one time he said he forgave them. At another, he asked if I came to befriend him. At another, he looked wildly, and asked if I meant to take the captain's part, and to kill him.

I was greatly affected by the situation of this poor man, whose image haunted me both night and day, and I was meditating how most effectually to assist him, when I heard that he was dead.

I was very desirous of tracing something further on this subject, when Walter Chandler, of the society of the Quakers, who had been daily looking out for intelligence for me, brought a young man to me of the name of Dixon. He had been one of

the crew of the same ship. He told me the particulars of the treatment of Thomas, with very little variation from those contained in the public report. After cross-examining him in the best manner I was able, I could find no inconsistency in his account.

I asked Dixon how the captain came to treat the surgeon's mate in particular so ill. He said he had treated them all much alike. A person of the name of Bulpin, he believed, was the only one who had escaped bad usage in the ship. With respect to himself, he had been cruelly used so early as in the outward bound passage, which had occasioned him to jump overboard. When taken up, he was put into irons, and kept in these for a considerable time. He was afterwards ill used at different times, and even so late as within three or four days of his return to port. For just before the Alfred made the island of Lundy, he was struck by the captain, who cut his under lip into two. He said that it had bled so much, that the captain expressed himself as if much alarmed; and having the expectation of arriving soon at Bristol, he had promised to make him amends, if he would hold his peace. This he said he had hitherto done, but he had received no recompense. In confirmation of his own usage, he desired me to examine his lip, which I had no occasion to do, having already perceived it, for the wound was apparently almost fresh.

I asked Dixon if there was any person in Bristol beside himself, who could confirm to me this his own treatment, as well as that of the other unfortunate man who was now dead. He referred me to a seaman of the name of Matthew Pyke. This person, when brought to me, not only related readily the particulars of the usage in both cases, as I have now stated them, but that which he received himself. He said that his own arm had been broken by the chief mate in Black River, Jamaica, and that he had also by the captain's orders, though contrary to the practice in merchant-vessels, been severely flogged. His arm appeared to be then in pain; and I had a proof of the punishment by an inspection of his back.

I asked Matthew Pyke if the crew in general had been

treated in a cruel manner. He replied they had, except James Bulpin. I then asked where James Bulpin was to be found. He told me where he had lodged; but feared he had gone home to his friends in Somersetshire, I think, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Bridgewater.

I thought it prudent to institute an inquiry into the characters of Thomas, Dixon, and Matthew Pyke, before I went further. The two former I found were strangers in Bristol, and I could collect nothing about them. The latter was a native of the place, had served his time as a seaman from the port, and was reputed of fair character.

My next business was to see James Bulpin. I found him just setting off for the country. He stopped, however, to converse with me. He was a young man of very respectable appearance, and of mild manners. His appearance, indeed, gave me reason to hope that I might depend upon his statements; but I was most of all influenced by the consideration that, never having been ill-used himself, he could have no inducement to go beyond the bounds of truth on this occasion. He gave me a melancholy confirmation of all the three cases. He told me, also, that one Joseph Cunningham had been a severe sufferer, and that there was reason to fear that Charles Horseler, another of the crew, had been so severely beaten over the breast with a knotted end of a rope, (which end was of the size of a large ball, and had been made on purpose,) that he died of it. To this he added, that it was now a notorious fact, that the captain of the Alfred, when mate of a slave-ship, had been tried at Barbados for the murder of one of the crew with whom he had sailed, but that he escaped by bribing the principal witness to disappear*.

The reader will see, the further I went into the history of this voyage, the more dismal it became. One miserable account, when examined, only brought up another. I saw no end to inquiry. The great question was, what was I to do? I thought

* Mr. Sampson, who was surgeon's mate of the ship in which the captain had thus served as a mate, confirmed to me afterwards this assertion, having often heard him boast in the cabin, "how he had tricked the law on that occasion."

the best thing would be to get the captain apprehended, and make him stand his trial either for the murder of Thomas or of Charles Horseler. I communicated with the late Mr. Burges, an eminent attorney, and the deputy town-clerk, on this occasion. He had shown an attachment to me on account of the cause I had undertaken, and had given me privately assistance in it. I say privately; because, knowing the sentiments of many of the corporate body at Bristol, under whom he acted, he was fearful of coming forward in an open manner. His advice to me was, to take notes of the case for my own private conviction, but to take no public cognizance of it. He said that seamen, as soon as their wages were expended, must be off to sea again. They could not generally, as landsmen do, maintain themselves on shore. Hence I should be obliged to keep the whole crew at my own expense till the day of trial, which might not be for months to come. He doubted not that, in the interim, the merchants and others would inveigle many of them away by making them boatswains and other inferior officers in some of their ships; so that, when the day of trial should come, I should find my witnesses dispersed and gone. He observed, moreover, that if any of the officers of the ship had any notion of going out again under the same owners*, I should have all these against me. To which he added, that if I were to make a point of taking up the cause of those whom I found complaining of hard usage in this trade, I must take up that of nearly all who sailed in it; for that he only knew of one captain from the port in the Slave Trade, who did not deserve long ago to be hanged. Hence I should get into a labyrinth of expense, and difficulty, and uneasiness of mind, from whence I should not easily find a clew to guide me.

* The seamen of the Alfred informed the purser of their ill usage. Matthew Pyke not only showed him his arm and his back, but acquainted him with the murder of Charles Horseler, stating that he had the instrument of his death in his possession. The purser seemed more alive to this than to any other circumstance, and wished to get it from him. Pyke, however, had given it to me. Now what will the reader think, when he is informed that the purser, after all this knowledge of the captain's cruelty, sent him out again, and that he was the same person who was purser of the Brothers, and who had also sent out the captain of that ship a second time, as has been related, notwithstanding his barbarities in former voyages!

This advice, though it was judicious, and founded on a knowledge of law proceedings, I found it very difficult to adopt. My own disposition was naturally such, that whatever I engaged in I followed with more than ordinary warmth. I could not be supposed, therefore, affected and interested as I then was, to be cool and tranquil on this occasion. And yet what would my worthy friend have said, if in this first instance I had opposed him? I had a very severe struggle in my own feelings on this account. At length, though reluctantly, I obeyed; but as the passions which agitate the human mind, when it is greatly inflamed, must have a vent somewhere, or must work off, as it were, or in working together must produce some new passion or effect, so I found the rage which had been kindling within me subsiding into the most determined resolutions of future increased activity and perseverance. I began now to think that the day was not long enough for me to labour in. I regretted often the approach of night, which suspended my work, and I often welcomed that of the morning, which restored me to it. When I felt myself weary, I became refreshed by the thought of what I was doing; when disconsolate, I was comforted by it. I lived in hope that every day's labour would furnish me with that knowledge which would bring this evil nearer to its end; and I worked on under these feelings, regarding neither trouble nor danger in the pursuit.

CHAPTER XV.

Author confers with the inhabitants of Bridgewater relative to a petition to parliament in behalf of the abolition; returns to Bristol; discovers a scandalous mode of procuring seamen for the Slave Trade, and of paying them; makes a comparative view of their loss in this and in other trades; procures imports and exports.—Examines the construction and admeasurement of slave ships; of the Fly and Neptune.—Difficulty of procuring evidence.—Case of Gardiner, of the Pilgrim; of Arnold, of the Ruby; some particulars of the latter in his former voyages.

HAVING heard by accident that the inhabitants of the town of Bridgewater had sent a petition to the House of Commons, in the year 1785, for the abolition of the Slave Trade, as has been related in a former part of the work, I determined, while my feelings were warm, to go there, and to try to find out those who had been concerned in it, and to confer with them as the tried friends of the cause. The time seemed to me to be approaching when the public voice should be raised against this enormous evil. I was sure that it was only necessary for the inhabitants of this favoured island to know it to feel a just indignation against it. Accordingly I set off. My friend George Fisher, who was before mentioned to have been of the religious Society of the Quakers, gave me an introduction to the respectable family of Ball, which was of the same religious persuasion. I called upon Mr. Sealey, Anstice, Crandon, Chubb, and others. I laid open to those whom I saw, the discoveries I had made relative to the loss and ill treatment of seamen; at which they seemed to be much moved; and it was agreed that if it should be thought a proper measure, (of which I would inform them when I had consulted the committee,) a second petition should be sent to Parliament from the inhabitants, praying for the abolition of the Slave Trade. With this view I left them several of my *Summary View*, before mentioned, to distribute, that the inhabitants might know more particularly the nature of the evil, against which they were going to complain. On my return to Bristol, I determined to inquire into the truth of the reports that seamen had an aversion to enter,

and that they were inveigled, if not often forced, into this hateful employment. For this purpose I was introduced to a landlord of the name of Thompson, who kept a public-house called the Seven Stars. He was a very intelligent man, was accustomed to receive sailors when discharged at the end of their voyages, and to board them till their vessels went out again, or to find them births in others. He avoided, however, all connexion with the Slave Trade, declaring that the credit of his house would be ruined if he were known to send those, who put themselves under his care, into it.

From him I collected the truth of all that had been stated to me on this subject. But I told him I should not be satisfied until I had beheld those scenes myself which he had described to me; and I entreated him to take me into them, saying that I would reward him for all his time and trouble, and that I would never forget him while I lived. To this he consented; and as three or four slave-vessels at this time were preparing for their voyages, it was time that we should begin our rounds. At about twelve at night we generally set out, and were employed till two and sometimes three in the morning. He led me from one of those public-houses to another which the mates of the slave-vessels used to frequent to pick up their hands. These houses were in Marsh-street, and most of them were then kept by Irishmen. The scenes witnessed in these houses were truly distressing to me; and yet, if I wished to know practically what I had purposed, I could not avoid them. Music, dancing, rioting, drunkenness, and profane swearing, were kept up from night to night. The young mariner, if a stranger to the port, and unacquainted with the nature of the Slave Trade, was sure to be picked up. The novelty of the voyages, the superiority of the wages in this over any other trades, and the privileges of various kinds, were set before him. Gulled in this manner, he was frequently enticed to the boat, which was waiting to carry him away. If these prospects did not attract him, he was plied with liquor till he became intoxicated, when a bargain was made over him between the landlord and the mate. After this his senses were kept in such a constant state of stupefaction by the liquor, that in time

the former might do with him what he pleased. Seamen, also, were boarded in these houses, who, when the slave-ships were going out, but at no other time, were encouraged to spend more than they had money to pay for; and to these, when they had thus exceeded, but one alternative was given, namely, a slave-vessel or a gaol. These distressing scenes I found myself obliged frequently to witness, for I was no less than nineteen times occupied in making these hateful rounds; and I can say from my own experience, and all the information I could collect from Thompson and others, that no such practices were in use to obtain seamen for other trades.

The treatment of the seamen employed in the Slave Trade had so deeply interested me, and now the manner of procuring them, that I was determined to make myself acquainted with their whole history; for I found by report that they were not only personally ill-treated, as I have already painfully described, but that they were robbed by artifice of those wages, which had been held up to them as so superior in this service. All persons were obliged to sign articles that, in case they should die or be discharged during the voyage, the wages then due to them should be paid in the currency where the vessel carried her slaves, and that half of the wages due to them on their arrival there should be paid in the same manner, and that they were never permitted to read over the articles they had signed. By means of this iniquitous practice the wages in the Slave Trade, though nominally higher in order to induce seamen to engage in it, were actually lower than in other trades. All these usages I ascertained in such a manner, that no person could doubt the truth of them. I actually obtained possession of articles of agreement belonging to these vessels, which had been signed and executed in former voyages. I made the merchants themselves, by sending those seamen who had claims upon them to ask for their accounts current with their respective ships, furnish me with such documents as would have been evidence against them in any court of law. On whatever branch of the system I turned my eyes, I found it equally barbarous. The trade was, in short, one mass of iniquity from the beginning to the end.

I employed myself occasionally in the Merchant's-hall, in making copies of the muster-rolls of ships sailing to different parts of the world, that I might make a comparative view of the loss of seamen in the Slave Trade, with that of those in the other trades from the same port. The result of this employment showed me the importance of it: for, when I considered how partial the inhabitants of this country were to their fellow-citizens, the seamen belonging to it, and in what estimation the members of the legislature held them, by enforcing the Navigation Act, which they considered to be the bulwark of the nation, and by giving bounties to certain trades, that these might become so many nurseries for the marine, I thought it of great importance to be able to prove, as I was then capable of doing, that more persons would be found dead in three slave-vessels from Bristol, in a given time, than in all the other vessels put together, numerous as they were, belonging to the same port.

I procured also an account of the exports and imports for the year 1786, by means of which I was enabled to judge of the comparative value of this and the other trades.

In pursuing another object, which was that of going on board the slave-ships, and learning their construction and dimensions, I was greatly struck, and indeed affected, by the appearance of two little sloops, which were fitting out for Africa, the one of only twenty-five tons, which was said to be destined to carry seventy and the other of only eleven, which was said to be destined to carry thirty slaves. I was told also that which was more affecting, namely, that these were not to act as tenders on the coast, by going up and down the rivers, and receiving three or four slaves at a time, and then carrying them to a large ship, which was to take them to the West Indies, but that it was actually intended, that they should transport their own slaves themselves; that one if not both of them were, on their arrival in the West Indies, to be sold as pleasure-vessels, and that the seamen belonging to them were to be permitted to come home by what is usually called the run.

This account of the destination of these little vessels, though it was distressing at first, appeared to me afterwards, on cool

reasoning, to be incredible. I thought that my informants wished to impose upon me, in order that I might make statements which would carry their own refutation with them, and that thus I might injure the great cause which I had undertaken. And I was much inclined to be of this opinion, when I looked again at the least of the two; for any person, who was tall, standing upon dry ground by the side of her, might have overlooked every thing upon her deck. I knew also that she had been built as a pleasure-boat for the accommodation of only six persons upon the Severn. I determined, therefore, to suspend my belief till I could take the admeasurement of each vessel. This I did; but lest, in the agitation of my mind on this occasion, I should have made any mistake, I desired my friend George Fisher to apply to the builder for his admeasurement also. With this he kindly complied. When he obtained it he brought it me. This account, which nearly corresponded with my own, was as follows:— In the vessel of twenty-five tons, the length of the upper part of the hold, or roof of the room, where the seventy slaves were to be stowed, was but little better than ten yards, or thirty-one feet. The greatest breadth of the bottom, or floor, was ten feet four inches, and the least five. Hence, a grown person must sit down all the voyage, and contract his limbs within the narrow limits of three square feet. In the vessel of eleven tons, the length of the room for the thirty slaves was twenty-two feet. The greatest breadth of the floor was eight, and the least four. The whole height from the keel to the beam was but five feet eight inches, three feet of which were occupied by ballast, cargo, and provisions, so that two feet eight inches remained only as the height between the decks. Hence, each slave would have only four square feet to sit in, and, when in this posture, his head, if he were a full-grown person, would touch the ceiling, or upper deck.

Having now received this admeasurement from the builder, which was rather more favourable than my own, I looked upon the destination of these little vessels as yet more incredible than before. Still the different persons, whom I occasionally saw on board them, persisted in it that they were going to Africa for slaves, and also for the numbers mentioned, which they were

afterwards to carry to the West Indies themselves. I desired, however, my friends, George Fisher, Truman Harford, Harry Gandy, Walter Chandler, and others, each to make a separate inquiry for me on this subject; and they all agreed that, improbable as the account both of their destination, and of the number they were to take, might appear, they had found it to be too true. I had soon afterwards the sorrow to learn from official documents from the Custom-house, that these little vessels actually cleared out for Africa, and that now nothing could be related so barbarous of this traffic, which might not instantly be believed.

In pursuing my different objects there was one, which, to my great vexation, I found it extremely difficult to attain. This was the procuring of any assurance from those who had been personally acquainted with the horrors of this trade, that they would appear, if called upon, as evidence against it. My friend Harry Gandy, to whom I had been first introduced, had been two voyages, as I before mentioned; and he was willing, though at an advanced age, to go to London, to state publicly all he knew concerning them. But with respect to the many others in Bristol, who had been to the coast of Africa, I had not yet found one who would come forward for this purpose. There were several old Slave Captains living there, who had a great knowledge of the subject. I thought it not unreasonable that I might gain one or two good evidences out of these, as they had probably long ago left the concern, and were not now interested in the continuance of it; but all my endeavours were fruitless. I sent messages to them by different persons. I met them in all ways. I stated to them, that if there was nothing objectionable in the trade, seeing it laboured under such a stigma, they had an opportunity of coming forward and of wiping away the stain. If, on the other hand, it was as bad as represented, then they had it in their power, by detailing the crimes which attached to it, of making some reparation or atonement, for the part they had taken in it. But no representations would do. All intercourse was positively forbidden between us; and whenever they met me in the street, they shunned me as if I had been a mad dog. I could not for

some time account for the strange disposition which they thus manifested towards me; but my friends helped me to unravel it, for I was assured that one or two of them, though they went no longer to Africa as captains, were in part owners of vessels trading there; and, with respect to all of them, it might be generally said, that they had been guilty of such enormities, that they would be afraid of coming forward in the way I proposed, lest any thing should come out by which they might criminate themselves. I was obliged then to give up all hope of getting any evidence from this quarter, and I saw but little prospect of getting it from those, who were then actually deriving their livelihood from the trade: and yet I was determined to persevere; for I thought that some might be found in it who were not yet so hardened as to be incapable of being awakened on this subject. I thought that others might be found in it who wished to leave it upon principle, and that these would unbosom themselves to me: and I thought it not improbable that I might fall in with others, who had come unexpectedly into a state of independence, and that these might be induced, as their livelihood would be no longer affected by giving me information, to speak the truth.

I persevered for weeks together under this hope, but could find no one of all those, who had been applied to, who would have any thing to say to me. At length, Walter Chandler had prevailed upon a young gentleman, of the name of Gardiner, who was going out as surgeon of the Pilgrim, to meet me. The condition was, that we were to meet at the house of the former, but that we were to enter in and go out at different times, that is, we were not to be seen together.

Gardiner, on being introduced to me, said at once, that he had often wished to see me on the subject of my errand, but that the owner of the Pilgrim had pointed me out to him as a person whom he would wish him to avoid. He then laid open to me the different methods of obtaining slaves in Africa, as he had learned from those on board his own vessel in his first, or former, voyage. He unfolded also the manner of their treatment in the Middle passage, with the various distressing scenes which had occurred in it. He stated the barbarous usuage of the seamen as

he had witnessed it, and concluded by saying, that there never was a subject which demanded so loudly the interference of the legislature as that of the Slave Trade.

When he had finished his narative, and answered the different questions which I had proposed to him concerning it, I asked him, in as delicate a manner as I could, how it happened, that, seeing the trade in this horrible light, he had consented to follow it again? He told me frankly, that he had received a regular medical education, but that his relations, being poor, had not been able to set him up in his profession. He had saved a little money in his last voyage. In that, which he was now to perform, he hoped to save a little more. With the profits of both voyages together, he expected he should be able to furnish a shop in the line of his profession, when he would wipe his hands of this detestable trade.

I then asked him, whether, upon the whole, he thought he had judged prudently, or whether the prospect of thus enabling himself to become independent, would counterbalance the uneasiness which might arise in future? He replied, that he had not so much to fear upon this account. The trade, while it continued, must have surgeons. But it made a great difference both to the crew and to the slaves, whether these discharged their duty towards them in a feeling manner, or not. With respect to himself, he was sure that he should pay every attention to the wants of each. This thought made his continuance in the trade for one voyage longer more reconcilable. But he added, as if not quite satisfied, "Cruel necessity!" and he fetched a deep sigh.

We took our leave, and departed, the one a few minutes after the other. The conversation of this young man was very interesting. I was much impressed both by the nature and the manner of it. I wished to secure him, if possible, as an evidence for parliament, and thus save him from his approaching voyage: but I knew not what to do. At first, I thought it would be easy to raise a subscription to set him up. But then, I was aware that this might be considered as bribery, and make his testimony worth nothing. I then thought that the committee might detain

him as an evidence, and pay him, in a reasonable manner, for his sustenance, till his testimony should be called for. But I did not know how long it would be before his examination might take place. It might be a year or two. I foresaw other difficulties also; and I was obliged to relinquish what otherwise I should have deemed a prize.

On reviewing the conversation which had passed between us after my return home, I thought, considering the friendly disposition of Gardiner towards us, I had not done all I could for the cause; and, communicating my feelings to Walter Chandler, he procured me another interview. At this, I asked him, if he would become an evidence if he lived to return. He replied, very heartily, that he would. I then asked him, if he would keep a journal of facts during his voyage, as it would enable him to speak more correctly, in case he should be called upon for his testimony. He assured me he would, and that he would make up a little book for that purpose. I asked him, lastly, when he meant to sail. He said, as soon as the ship could get all her hands. It was their intention to sail to-morrow, but that seven men, whom the mates had brought drunk out of Marsh-street the evening before, were so terrified when they found they were going to Africa, that they had seized the boat that morning, and had put themselves on shore. I took my leave of him, entreating him to follow his resolutions of kindness both to the sailors and the slaves, and wished him a speedy and a safe return.

On going one day by the Exchange, after this interview with Gardiner, I overheard a young gentleman say to another, "that it happened on the coast, last year, and that he saw it." I wished to know who he was, and to get at him if I could. I watched him at a distance for more than half an hour, when I saw him leave his companion. I followed him till he entered a house. I then considered whether it would be proper, and in what manner, to address him when he should come out of it. But I waited three hours, and I never saw him. I then concluded that he either lodged where I saw him enter, or that he had gone to dine with some friend. I therefore took notice of

the house, and, showing it afterwards to several of my friends, desired them to make him out for me. In a day or two I had an interview with him. His name was James Arnold. He had been two voyages to the coast of Africa for slaves; one as a surgeon's mate in the Alexander, in the year 1785, and the other as surgeon in the Little Pearl, in the year 1786, from which he had not then very long returned.

I asked him if he was willing to give me any account of these voyages, for that I was making an inquiry into the nature of the Slave Trade. He replied, he knew that I was. He had been cautioned about falling in with me; he had, however, taken no pains to avoid me. It was a bad trade, and ought to be exposed.

I went over the same ground as I had gone with Gardiner, relative to the first of these voyages, or that in the Alexander. It is not necessary to detail the particulars. It is impossible, however, not to mention, that the treatment of the seamen on board this vessel was worse than I had ever before heard of. No less than eleven of them, unable to bear their lives, had deserted at Bonny, on the coast of Africa,—which is a most unusual thing,—choosing all that could be endured, though in a most inhospitable climate, and in the power of the natives, rather than to continue in their own ship. Nine others also, in addition to the loss of these, had died in the same voyage. As to the rest, he believed, without any exception, that they had been badly used.

In examining him with respect to his second voyage, or that in the Little Pearl, two circumstances came out with respect to the slaves, which I shall relate in few words.

The chief mate used to beat the men-slaves on very trifling occasions. About eleven one evening, the ship then lying off the coast, he heard a noise in their room. He jumped down among them with the lanthorn in his hand. Two of those who had been ill-used by him, forced themselves out of their irons, and, seizing him, struck him with the bolt of them, and it was with some difficulty that he was extricated from them by the crew.

The men-slaves, unable now to punish him, and finding they had created an alarm, began to proceed to extremities. They

endeavoured to force themselves up the gratings, and to pull down a partition which had been made for a sick-birth; when they were fired upon and repressed. The next morning they were brought up one by one; when it appeared that a boy had been killed, who was afterwards thrown into the sea.

The two men, however, who had forced themselves out of irons, did not come up with the rest, but found their way into the hold, and armed themselves with knives from a cask, which had been opened for trade. One of them being called to in the African tongue by a black trader, who was then on board, came up, but with a knife in each hand; when one of the crew, supposing him yet hostile, shot him in the right side and killed him on the spot.

The other remained in the hold for twelve hours. Scalding water mixed with fat was poured down upon him, to make him come up. Though his flesh was painfully blistered by these means, he kept below. A promise was then made to him in the African tongue by the same trader, that no injury should be done him if he would come among them. To this at length he consented; but on observing, when he was about half way up, that a sailor was armed between decks, he flew to him, and clasped him, and threw him down. The sailor fired his pistol in the scuffle, but without effect; he contrived, however, to fracture his skull with the butt end of it, so that the slave died on the third day.

The second circumstance took place after the arrival of the same vessel at St. Vincent's. There was a boy-slave on board, who was very ill and emaciated. The mate, who, by his cruelty, had been the author of the former mischief, did not choose to expose him to sale with the rest, lest the small sum he would fetch in that situation should lower the average price, and thus bring down* the value of the privileges of the officers of the ship. This boy was kept on board, and no provisions allowed him.

* Officers are said to be allowed the privilege of one or more slaves, according to their rank. When the cargo is sold, the sum total fetched is put down, and this being divided by the number of slaves sold, gives the average price of each. Such officers, then, receive this average price for one or more slaves, according to their privileges, but never the slaves themselves

The mate had suggested the propriety of throwing him overboard, but no one would do it. On the ninth day he expired, having never been allowed any sustenance during that time.

I asked Mr. Arnold if he was willing to give evidence of these facts in both cases. He said he had only one objection, which was, that in two or three days he was to go in the Ruby on his third voyage: but on leaving me, he said, that he would take an affidavit before the mayor of the truth of any of those things which he had related to me, if that would do; but, from motives of safety, he should not choose to do this till within a few hours before he sailed.

In two or three days after this he sent for me; he said the Ruby would leave King-road the next day, and that he was ready to do as he had promised. Depositions were accordingly made out from his own words. I went with him to the residence of George Daubeny, Esq., who was then chief magistrate of the city, and they were sworn to in his presence, and witnessed as the law requires.

On taking my leave of him, I asked him how he could go a third time in such a barbarous employ; he said he had been distressed. In his voyage in the Alexander he had made nothing; for he had been so ill-used, that he had solicited his discharge in Grenada, where, being paid in currency, he had but little to receive. When he arrived in Bristol from that island, he was quite penniless; and finding the Little Pearl going out, he was glad to get on board her as her surgeon, which he then did entirely for the sake of bread. He said, moreover, that she was but a small vessel, and that his savings had been but small in her. This occasioned him to apply for the Ruby, his present ship; but if he survived this voyage he would never go another. I then put the same question to him as to Gardiner, and he promised to keep a journal of facts, and to give his evidence, if called upon, on his return.

The reader will see, from this account, the difficulty I had in procuring evidence from this port. The owners of vessels employed in the trade there forbade all intercouse with me; the old captains, who had made their fortunes in it, would not see me;

the young, who were making them, could not be supposed to espouse my cause, to the detriment of their own interest. Of those whose necessities made them go into it for a livelihood, I could not get one to come forward, without doing so much for him as would have amounted to bribery. Thus, when I got one of these into my possession, I was obliged to let him go again. I was, however, greatly consoled by the consideration, that I had procured two sentinels to be stationed in the enemy's camp, who keeping a journal of different facts, would bring me some important intelligence at a future period.

CHAPTER XVI.

Author goes to Monmouth; confers relative to a petition from that place; returns to Bristol; is introduced to Alexander Falconbridge; takes one of the mates of the Africa out of that ship; visits disabled seamen from the ship Thomas; puts a chief mate into prison for the murder of William Lines.—Ill-usage of seamen in various other slave-vessels; secures Crutwell's Bath paper in favour of the abolition; lays the foundation of a committee at Bristol; and of a petition from thence also; takes his leave of that city.

By this time I began to feel the effect of my labours upon my constitution. It had been my practice to go home in the evening to my lodgings, about twelve o'clock, and then to put down the occurrences of the day. This usually kept me up till one, and sometimes till nearly two in the morning. When I went my rounds in Marsh-street, I seldom got home till two, and into bed till three. My clothes, also, were frequently wet through with the rains. The cruel accounts I was daily in the habit of hearing, both with respect to the slaves, and to the seamen employed in this wicked trade, from which, indeed, my mind had no respite, often broke my sleep in the night, and occasioned me to awake in an agitated state. All these circumstances concurred in affecting my health; I looked thin; my countenance became yellow; I had also rheumatic feelings. My friends, seeing this, prevailed upon me to give myself two or three days' relaxation; and as a gentleman, of whom I had some knowledge, was going into Carmarthenshire, I accompanied him as far as Monmouth.

After our parting at this place, I became restless and uneasy, and longed to get back to my work. I thought, however, that my journey ought not to be wholly useless to the cause; and hearing that Dr. Davis, a clergyman at Monmouth, was a man of considerable weight among the inhabitants, I took the liberty of writing him a letter, in which I stated who I was, and the way in which I had lately employed myself, and the great wish I had to be favoured with an interview with him; and I did not

conceal that it would be very desirable, if the inhabitants of the place could have that information on the subject which would warrant them in so doing, that they should petition the legislature for the abolition of the Slave Trade. Dr. Davis returned me an answer, and received me. The questions which he put to me were judicious. He asked me, first, whether, if the slaves were emancipated, there would not be much confusion in the islands? I told him that the emancipation of them was no part of our plan; we solicited nothing but the stopping of all future importations of them into the islands. He then asked what the planters would do for labourers? I replied, they would find sufficient from an increase of the native population, if they were obliged to pay attention to the latter means. We discoursed a long time upon this last topic. I have not room to give the many other questions he proposed to me: no one was ever more judiciously questioned. In my turn, I put him into possession of all the discoveries I had made. He acknowledged the injustice of the trade; he confessed, also, that my conversation had enlightened him as to the impolicy of it; and, taking some of my *Summary View* to distribute, he said he hoped that the inhabitants would, after the perusal of them, accede to my request.

On my return to Bristol, my friends had procured for me an interview with Mr. Alexander Falconbridge, who had been to the coast of Africa, as a surgeon, for four voyages; one in the Tartar, another in the Alexander, and two in the Emilia slave-vessels.

On my introduction to him, I asked him if he had any objection to give me an account of the cruelties which were said to be connected with the Slave Trade; he answered, without any reserve, that he had not; for that he had now done with it. Never were any words more welcome to my ears than these: "Yes—I have done with the trade;"—and he said, also, that he was free to give me information concerning it. Was he not then one of the very persons, whom I had so long been seeking, but in vain?

To detail the accounts which he gave me at this and at subsequent interviews, relative to the different branches of this trade, would fill no ordinary volume. Suffice it to say, in general terms,

as far as relates to the slaves, that he confirmed the various violent and treacherous methods of procuring them in their own country; their wretched condition, in consequence of being crowded together in the passage; their attempts to rise in defence of their own freedom, and, when this was impracticable, to destroy themselves by the refusal of sustenance, by jumping overboard into the sea, and in other ways; the effect also of their situation upon their minds, by producing insanity and various diseases; and the cruel manner of disposing of them in the West Indies, and of separating relatives and friends.

With respect to the seamen employed in this trade, he commended Captain Frazer for his kind usage to them, under whom he had so long served. The handsome way in which he spoke of the latter pleased me much, because I was willing to deduce from it his own impartiality, and because I thought I might infer from it, also, his regard to truth as to other parts of his narrative. Indeed I had been before acquainted with this circumstance. Thompson, of the Seven Stars, had informed me that Frazer was the only man sailing out of that port for slaves who had not been guilty of cruelty to his seamen: and Mr. Burges alluded to it, when he gave me advice not to proceed against the captain of the Alfred; for he then said, as I mentioned in a former chapter, "that he knew but one captain in the trade, who did not deserve long ago to be hanged." Mr. Falconbridge, however, stated, that though he had been thus fortunate in the Tartar and Emilia, he had been as unfortunate in the Alexander; for he believed there were no instances upon naval record, taken altogether, of greater barbarity, than of that which had been exercised towards the seamen in this voyage. In running over these, it struck me that I had heard of the same from some other quarter, or at least that these were so like the others, that I was surprised at their coincidence. On taking out my notes, I looked for the names of those whom I recollected to have been used in this manner; and on desiring Mr. Falconbridge to mention the names of those, also, to whom he alluded, they turned out to be the same. The mystery, however, was soon cleared up, when I told him from whom I had received my intelligence: for Mr.

Arnold, the last-mentioned person in the last chapter, had been surgeon's mate under Mr. Falconbridge in the same vessel.

There was one circumstance of peculiar importance, but quite new to me, which I collected from the information which Mr. Falconbridge had given me. This was, that many of the seamen, who left the slave-ships in the West Indies, were in such a weak, ulcerated, and otherwise diseased state, that they perished there. Several, also, of those who came home with the vessels were in the same deplorable condition. This was the case, Mr. Falconbridge said, with some who returned in the Alexander. It was the case, also, with many others; for he had been a pupil for twelve months in the Bristol Infirmary, and had had ample means of knowing the fact. The greatest number of seamen, at almost all times, who were there, were from the slave-vessels. These, too, were usually there on account of disease, whereas those from other ships were usually there on account of accidents. The health of some of the former was so far destroyed, that they were never wholly to be restored. This information was of great importance; for it showed that they who were reported dead upon the muster-rolls, were not all that were lost to the country by the prosecution of this wicked trade. Indeed, it was of so much importance, that in all my future interviews with others, which were for the purpose of collecting evidence, I never forgot to make it a subject of inquiry.

I can hardly say how precious I considered the facts with which Mr. Falconbridge had furnished me from his own experience, relative to the different branches of this commerce. They were so precious, that I began now to be troubled lest I should lose them. For, though he had thus privately unbosomed himself to me, it did not follow that he would come forward as a public evidence. I was not a little uneasy on this account. I was fearful lest, when I should put this question to him, his future plan of life, or some little narrow consideration of future interest, would prevent him from giving his testimony, and I delayed asking him for many days. During this time, however, I frequently visited him; and at length, when I thought I was better acquainted, and probably in some little estimation, with

him, I ventured to open my wishes on this subject. He answered me boldly, and at once, that he had left the trade upon principle, and that he would state all he knew concerning it, either publicly or privately, and at any time when he should be called upon to do it. This answer produced such an effect upon me, after all my former disappointments, that I felt it all over my frame. It operated like a sudden shock, which often disables the impressed person for a time. So the joy I felt rendered me quite useless, as to business, for the remaindor of the day.

I began to perceive in a little time the advantage of having cultivated an acquaintance with Thompson of the Seven Stars. For nothing could now pass in Bristol, relative to the seamen employed in this trade, but it was soon brought to me. If there was anything amiss, I had so arranged matters that I was sure to hear of it. He sent for me one day to inform me that several of the seamen, who had been sent out of Marsh Street into the Prince, which was then at Kingroad, and on the point of sailing to Africa for slaves, had, through fear of ill usage on the voyage, taken the boat and put themselves on shore. He informed me, at the same time, that the seamen of the Africa, which was lying there also, and ready to sail on a like voyage, were not satisfied, for that they had been made to sign their articles of agreement without being permitted to see them. To this he added, that Mr. Sheriff, one of the mates of the latter vessel, was unhappy, also, on this account. Sheriff had been a mate in the West India trade, and was a respectable man in his line. He had been enticed by the captain of the Africa, under the promise of peculiar advantages, to change his voyage. Having a wife and family at Bristol, he was willing to make a sacrifice on their account: but when he himself was not permitted to read the articles, he began to suspect bad work, and that there would be nothing but misery in the approaching voyage. Thompson entreated me to extricate him if I could. He was sure, he said, if he went to the coast with that man, meaning the captain, that he would never return alive.

I was very unwilling to refuse anything to Thompson. I was deeply bound to him in gratitude for the many services he had

rendered me, but I scarcely saw how I could serve him on this occasion. I promised, however, to speak to him in an hour's time. I consulted my friend Truman Harford in the interim; and the result was, that he and I should proceed to Kingroad in a boat, go on board the Africa, and charge the captain in person with what he had done, and desire him to discharge Sheriff, as no agreement, where fraud or force was used in the signatures, could be deemed valid. If we were not able to extricate Sheriff by these means, we thought that at least we should know, by inquiring of those whom we should see on board, whether the measure of hindering the men from seeing their articles on signing them had been adopted. It would be useful to ascertain this, because such a measure had been long reported to be usual in this, but was said to be unknown in any other trade.

Having passed the river's mouth, and rowed towards the sea, we came near the Prince first, but pursued our destination to the Africa. Mr. Sheriff was the person who received us on board. I did not know him till I asked his name. I then told him my errand, with which he seemed to be much pleased. On asking him to tell the captain that I wished to speak with him, he replied that he was on shore. This put me to great difficulty, as I did not know then what to do. I consulted with Truman Harford, and it was our opinion that we should inquire of the seamen, but in a very quiet manner, by going individually to each, if they had ever demanded to see the articles on signing them, and if they had been refused. We proposed this question to them. They replied, that the captain had refused them in a savage manner, making use of threats and oaths. There was not one contradictory voice on this occasion. We then asked Mr. Sheriff what we were to do. He entreated us by all means to take him on shore. He was sure that under such a man as the captain, and particularly after the circumstance of our coming on board should be made known to him, he would never come from the coast of Africa alive. Upon this, Truman Harford called me aside, and told me the danger of taking an officer from the ship; for that, if any accident should happen to her, the damage might all fall upon me. I then inquired of Mr. Sheriff if there was any

officer on board who could manage the ship. He pointed one out to me, and I spoke to him in the cabin. This person told me I need be under no apprehension about the vessel, but that every one would be sorry to lose Mr. Sheriff. Upon this ground, Truman Harford, who had felt more for me than for himself, became now easy. We had before concluded, that the obtaining any signature by fraud or force would render the agreement illegal. We therefore joined in opinion, that we might take away the man. His chest was accordingly put into our boat. We jumped into it with our rowers, and he followed us, surrounded by the seamen, all of whom took an affectionate leave of him, and expressed their regret at parting. Soon after this there was a general cry of "Will you take me, too?" from the deck; and such a sudden movement appeared there, that we were obliged to push off directly from the side, fearing that many would jump into our boat and go with us.

After having left the ship, Sheriff corroborated the desertion of the seamen from the Prince, as before related to me by Thompson. He spoke also of the savage disposition of his late captain, which he had even dared to manifest though lying in an English port. I was impressed by this account of his rough manners; and the wind having risen before and the surf now rolling heavily, I began to think what an escape I might have had; how easy it would have been for the savage captain, if he had been on board, or for any one at his instigation, to have pushed me over the ship's side. This was the first time I had ever considered the peril of the undertaking. But we arrived safe; and though on the same evening I left my name at the captain's house, as that of the person who had taken away his mate, I never heard more about it.

In pursuing my inquiries into the new topic suggested by Mr. Falconbridge, I learnt that two or three of the seamen of the ship Thomas, which had arrived now nearly a year from the Coast, were in a very crippled and deplorable state; I accordingly went to see them. One of them had been attacked by a fever, arising from circumstances connected with these voyages. The inflammation, which had proceeded from it, had reached his eyes;

it could not be dispersed; and the consequence was, that he was then blind. The second was lame; he had badly ulcerated legs, and appeared to be very weak. The third was a mere spectre; I think he was the most pitiable object I ever saw. I considered him as irrecoverably gone. They all complained to me of their bad usage on board the Thomas. They said they had heard of my being in Bristol, and they hoped I would not leave it without inquiring into the murder of William Lines.

On inquiring who William Lines was, they informed me that he had been one of the crew of the same ship, and that all on board believed that he had been killed by the chief mate; but they themselves had not been present when the blows were given him; they had not seen him till afterwards; but their shipmates had told them of his cruel treatment, and they knew that soon afterwards he had died.

In the course of the next day, the mother of Lines, who lived in Bristol, came to me and related the case. I told her there was no evidence as to the fact, for that I had seen three seamen, who could not speak to it from their own knowledge. She said, there were four others then in Bristol who could; I desired her to fetch them. When they arrived I examined each separately, and cross-examined them in the best manner I was able; I could find no variation in their account, and I was quite convinced that the murder had taken place. The mother was then importunate that I should take up the case. I was too much affected by the narration I had heard to refuse her wholly, and yet I did not promise that I would; I begged a little time to consider of it. During this I thought of consulting my friend Burges, but I feared he would throw cold water upon it, as he had done in the case of the captain of the Alfred. I remembered well what he had then said to me, and yet I felt a strong disposition to proceed, for the trade was still going on. Every day, perhaps, some new act of barbarity was taking place; and one example, if made, might counteract the evil for a time. I seemed therefore to incline to stir in this matter, and thought, if I should get into any difficulty about it, it would be better to do it without consulting Mr. Burges, than, after having done it, to fly as it were in his

face. I then sent for the woman, and told her that she might appear with the witnesses at the Common Hall, where the magistrates usually sat on a certain day.

We all met at the time appointed, and I determined to sit as near to the mayor as I could get. The hall was unusually crowded. One or two slave-merchants, and two or three others, who were largely concerned in the West India trade, were upon the bench; for I had informed the mayor the day before of my intention, and he, it appeared, had informed them. I shall never forget the savage looks which these people gave me; which indeed were so remarkable, as to occasion the eyes of the whole court to be turned upon me. They looked as if they were going to speak to me, and the people looked as if they expected me to say something in return. They then got round the mayor, and began to whisper to him, as I supposed, on the business before it should come on. One of them, however, said aloud to the former, but fixing his eyes upon me, and wishing me to overhear him, "Scandalous reports had lately been spread, but sailors were not used worse in Guineamen than in other vessels." This brought the people's eyes upon me again; I was very much irritated, but I thought it improper to say anything. Another, looking savagely at me, said to the mayor, "that he had known Captain Vicars a long time; that he was an honourable man*, and would not allow such usage in his ship. There were always vagabonds to hatch up things;" and he made a dead point at me, by putting himself into a posture which attracted the notice of those present, and by staring me in the face. I could now no longer restrain myself, and I said aloud, in as modest a manner as I could, "You, sir, may know many things which I do not; but this I know, that if you do not do your duty, you are amenable to a higher court." The mayor upon this looked at me, and directly my friend

* We may well imagine what this person's notion of another man's honour was; for he was the purser of the Brothers and of the Alfred, who, as before mentioned, sent the captains of those ships out a second voyage, after knowing their barbarities in the former; and he was also the purser of this very ship Thomas, where the murder had been committed. I by no means, however, wish by these observations to detract from the character of Captain Vicars, as he had no concern in the cruel deed.

Mr. Burges, who was sitting as the clerk to the magistrates, went to him and whispered something in his ear; after which all private conversation between the mayor and others ceased, and the hearing was ordered to come on.

I shall not detain the reader by giving an account of the evidence which then transpired. The four witnesses were examined, and the case was so far clear; Captain Vicars, however, was sent for. On being questioned, he did not deny that there had been bad usage, but said that the young man had died of the flux. But this assertion went for nothing when balanced against the facts which had come out; and this was so evident, that an order was made out for the apprehension of the chief mate. He was accordingly taken up. The next day, however, there was a rehearing of the case, when he was returned to the gaol, where he was to lie till the Lords of the Admiralty should order a sessions to be held for the trial of offences committed on the high seas.

This public examination of the case of William Lines, and the way in which it ended, produced an extraordinary result; for after this time the slave-captains and mates who used to meet me suddenly, used as suddenly to start from me, indeed to the other side of the pavement, as if I had been a wolf, or tiger, or some dangerous beast of prey. Such of them as saw me beforehand used to run up the cross streets or lanes, which were nearest to them, to get away. Seamen, too, came from various quarters to apply to me for redress. One came to me who had been treated ill in the Alexander, when Mr. Falconbridge had been the surgeon of her. Three came to me who had been ill-used in the voyage which followed, though she had then sailed under a new captain. Two applied to me from the Africa, who had been of her crew in the last voyage. Two from the Fly. Two from the Wasp. One from the Little Pearl, and three from the Pilgrim or Princess, when she was last upon the coast.

The different scenes of barbarity which these represented to me, greatly added to the affliction of my mind. My feelings became now almost insupportable. I was agonized to think that this trade should last another day. I was in a state of agitation from

morning till night. I determined I would soon leave Bristol. I saw nothing but misery in the place. I had collected now, I believed, all the evidence it would afford; and to stay in it a day longer than was necessary, would be only an interruption for so much time both of my happiness and of my health. I determined therefore to do only two or three things, which I thought to be proper, and to depart in a few days.

And first I went to Bath, where I endeavoured to secure the respectable paper belonging to that city in favour of the abolition of the Slave Trade. This I did entirely to my satisfaction, by relating to the worthy editor all the discoveries I had made, and by impressing his mind in a forcible manner on the subject. And it is highly to the honour of Mr. Crutwell, that from that day he never ceased to defend our cause; that he never made a charge for insertions of any kind; but that he considered all he did upon this occasion in the light of a duty, or as his mite given in charity to a poor and oppressed people.

The next attempt was to lay the foundation of a committee in Bristol, and of a petition to Parliament from it for the abolition of the Slave Trade. I had now made many friends. A gentleman of the name of Paynter had felt himself much interested in my labours. Mr. Joseph Harford, a man of fortune, of great respectability of character, and of considerable influence, had attached himself to the cause. Dr. Fox had assisted me in it. Mr. Hughes, a clergyman of the baptist church, was anxious and ready to serve it. Dr. Camplin, of the establishment, with several of his friends, continued steady. Matthew Wright, James Harford, Truman Harford, and all the Quakers to a man, were strenuous, and this on the best of principles, in its support. To all these I spoke, and I had the pleasure of seeing that my wishes were likely in a short time to be gratified in both these cases.

It was now necessary that I should write to the committee in London. I had written to them only two letters during my absence; for I had devoted myself so much to the great object I had undertaken, that I could think of little else. Hence some of my friends among them were obliged to write to different persons

at Bristol, to inquire if I was alive. I gave up a day or two, therefore, to this purpose. I informed the committee of all my discoveries in the various branches to which my attention had been directed, and desired them in return to procure me various official documents for the port of London, which I then specified. Having done this, I conferred with Mr. Falconbridge, relative to being with me at Liverpool. I thought it right to make him no other offer than that his expenses should be paid. He acceded to my request on these disinterested terms; and I took my departure from Bristol, leaving him to follow me in a few days.

CHAPTER XVII.

Author secures the Gloucester paper, and lays the foundation of a petition from that city; does the same at Worcester, and at Chester.—Arrives at Liverpool.—Collects specimens of African produce; also imports and exports, and muster-rolls, and accounts of dock duties, and iron instruments used in the Slave Trade.—His introduction to Mr. Norris, and others.—Author and his errand become known.—People visit him out of curiosity.—Frequent controversies on the subject of the Slave Trade.

On my arrival at Gloucester, I waited upon my friend Dean Tucker. He was pleased to hear of the great progress I had made since he left me. On communicating to him my intention of making interest with the editors of some provincial papers, to enlighten the public mind, and with the inhabitants of some respectable places, for petitions to Parliament, relative to the abolition of the Slave Trade, he approved of it, and introduced me to Mr. Raikes, the proprietor of the respectable paper belonging to that city. Mr. Raikes acknowledged, without any hesitation, the pleasure he should have in serving such a noble cause; and he promised to grant me, from time to time, a corner in his paper, for such things as I might point out to him for insertion. This promise he performed afterwards, without any pecuniary consideration, and solely on the ground of benevolence. He promised also his assistance as to the other object, for the promotion of which I left him several of my *Summary View* to distribute.

At Worcester I trod over the same ground, and with the same success. Timothy Bevington, of the religious society of the Quakers, was the only person to whom I had an introduction there: he accompanied me to the mayor, to the editor of the Worcester paper, and to several others, before each of whom I pleaded the cause of the oppressed Africans in the best manner I was able. I dilated both on the inhumanity and on the impolicy of the trade, which I supported by the various facts recently obtained at Bristol. I desired, however, as far as petitions were concerned, (and this desire I expressed on all other

similar occasions,) that no attempt should be made to obtain these, till such information had been circulated on the subject, that every one, when called upon, might judge, from his knowledge of it, how far he would feel it right to join in it. For this purpose I left also here several of my *Summary View* for distribution.

After my arrival at Chester, I went to the bishop's residence, but I found he was not there. Knowing no other person in the place, I wrote a note to Mr. Cowdroy, whom I understood to be the editor of the Chester paper, soliciting an interview with him. I explained my wishes to him on both subjects. He seemed to be greatly rejoiced, when we met, that such a measure as that of the abolition of the Slave Trade was in contemplation. Living at so short a distance from Liverpool, and in a country from which so many persons were constantly going to Africa, he was by no means ignorant, as some were, of the nature of this cruel traffic; but yet he had no notion that I had probed it so deeply, or that I had brought to light such important circumstances concerning it, as he found by my conversation. He made me a hearty offer of his services on this occasion, and this expressly without fee or reward. I accepted them most joyfully and gratefully. It was, indeed, a most important thing, to have a station so near the enemy's camp, where we could watch their motions, and meet any attack which might be made from it. And this office of a sentinel Mr. Cowdroy performed with great vigilance; and when he afterwards left Chester for Manchester, to establish a paper there, he carried with him the same friendly disposition towards our cause.

My first introduction at Liverpool was to William Rathbone, a member of the religious society of the Quakers. He was the same person who, before the formation of our committee, had procured me copies of several of the muster-rolls of the slave-vessels belonging to that port, so that, though we were not personally known, yet we were not strangers to each other. Isaac Hadwen, a respectable member of the same society, was the person whom I saw next. I had been introduced to him, previously to my journey, when he was at London, at the yearly meeting of the

Quakers, so that no letter to him was necessary. As Mr. Roscoe had generally given the profits of *The Wrongs of Africa* to our committee, I made no scruple of calling upon him. His reception of me was very friendly, and he introduced me afterwards to Dr. Currie, who had written the preface to that poem. There was also a fourth upon whom I called, though I did not know him. His name was Edward Rushton: he had been an officer in a slave-ship,. but had lost his sight, and had become an enemy to that trade. On passing through Chester, I had heard, for the first time, that he had published a poem called *West Indian Eclogues*, with a view of making the public better acquainted with the evil of the Slave Trade, and of exciting their indignation against it. Of the three last it may be observed, that, having come forward thus early, as labourers, they deserve to be put down, as I have placed them in the map, among the forerunners and coadjutors in this great cause, for each published his work before any efforts were made publicly, or without knowing that any were intended. Rushton, also, had the boldness, though then living in Liverpool, to affix his name to his work. These were the only persons whom I knew for some time after my arrival in that place.

It may not, perhaps, be necessary to enter so largely into my proceedings at Liverpool as at Bristol. The following account, therefore, may suffice:—

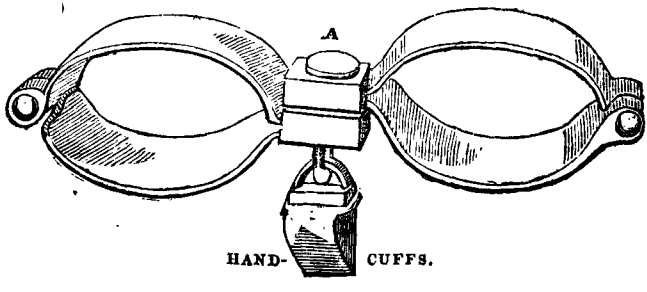
In my attempts to add to my collection of specimens of African produce, I was favoured with a sample of gum ruber astringents, of cotton from the Gambia, of indigo and musk, of long pepper, of black pepper from Whidàh, of mahogany from Calabar, and of cloths of different colours, made by the natives, which, while they gave other proofs of the quality of their own cotton, gave proofs, also, of the variety of their dyes.

I made interest at the Custom-house for various exports and imports, and for copies of the muster-rolls of several slave-vessels, besides those of vessels employed in other trades.

By looking out constantly for information on this great subject, I was led to the examination of a printed card or table of the dock duties of Liverpool, which was published annually.

The town of Liverpool had so risen in opulence and importance, from only a fishing-village, that the corporation seemed to have a pride in giving a public view of this increase. Hence they published and circulated this card. Now the card contained one, among other facts, which was almost as precious, in a political point of view, as any I had yet obtained. It stated that in the year 1772, when I knew that a hundred vessels sailed out of Liverpool for the coast of Africa, the dock-duties amounted to 4552*l.*, and that in 1779, when I knew that, in consequence of the war, only eleven went from thence to the same coast, they amounted to 4957*l.* From these facts put together, two conclusions were obvious. The first was, that the opulence of Liverpool, as far as the entry of vessels into its ports, and the dock-duties arising from thence, were concerned, was not indebted to the Slave Trade; for these duties were highest when it had only eleven ships in that employ. The second was, that there had been almost a practical experiment with respect to the abolition of it; for the vessels in it had been gradually reduced from one hundred to eleven, and yet the West Indians had not complained of their ruin, nor had the merchants or manufacturers suffered, nor had Liverpool been affected by the change.

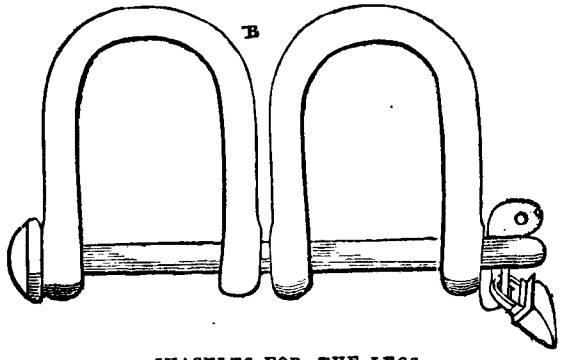
There were specimens of articles in Liverpool, which I entirely overlooked at Bristol, and which I believed I should have overlooked here also, had it not been for seeing them at a window in a shop; I mean those of different iron instruments used in this cruel traffic. I bought a pair of the iron hand-cuffs with which the men-slaves are confined. The right-hand wrist of one, and the left of another, are almost brought into contact by these, and fastened together, as the figure A in the annexed plate represents, by a little bolt with a small padlock at the end of it.



HAND-CUFFS.

I bought also a pair of shackles for the legs. These are represented by the figure B.

The right ancle of one man is fastened to the left of another, as the reader will observe, by similar means. I bought these, not because it was difficult to conceive how the unhappy victims of this execrable trade were confined, but to show the fact that they were so. For what was the inference from it, but that they did not leave their own country willingly; that, when they were in the holds of the slave-vessels, they were not in the Elysium which had been represented; and that there was a fear either that they would make their escape, or punish their oppressors?

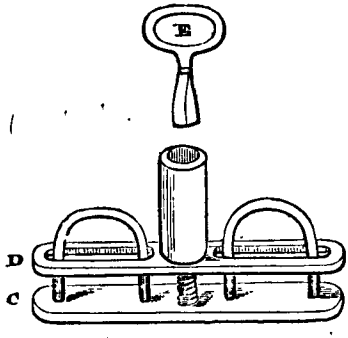


SHACKLES FOR THE LEGS.

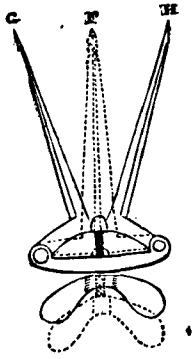
I bought also a thumb-screw at this shop. The thumbs are put into this instrument through the two circular holes at the top of it. By turning a key, a bar rises up by means of a screw from C to D, and the pressure upon them becomes painful. By turning it further you may make the blood start from the ends of them. By taking the key away, as at E, you leave the tortured person in agony, without any means of extricating himself, or of being extricated by others. This screw, as I was then informed, was applied by way of punishment, in case of obstinacy in the slaves, or for any other reputed offence, at the discretion of the captain.

At the same place I bought another instrument which I saw. It was called a speculum oris. The dotted lines in the figure on the right hand of the screw represent it when shut, the black lines when open. It is opened, as at G H, by a screw below with

a nob at the end of it. This instrument is known among surgeons, having been invented to assist them in wrenching open the mouth as in the case of a locked jaw; but it had got into use in this trade.



THUMB SCREW.



SPECULUM ORIS.

On asking the seller of the instruments on what occasion it was used there, he replied that the slaves were frequently so sulky as to shut their mouths against all sustenance, and this with a determination to die; and that it was necessary their mouths should be forced open to throw in nutriment, that they who had purchased them might incur no loss by their death.

The town-talk of Liverpool was much of the same nature as that at Bristol on the subject of this trade. Horrible facts concerning it were in everybody's mouth; but they were more numerous, as was likely to be the case where eighty vessels were employed from one port, and only eighteen from the other. The people, too, at Liverpool seemed to be more hardened, or they related them with more coldness or less feeling. This may be accounted for from the greater number of those facts, as just related, the mention of which, as it was of course more frequent, occasioned them to lose their power of exciting surprise. All this I thought in my favour, as I should more easily, or with less obnoxiousness, come to the knowledge of what I wanted to obtain.

My friend William Rathbone, who had been looking out to supply me with intelligence, but who was desirous that I should

not be imposed upon, and that I should get it from the fountain-head, introduced me to Mr. Norris for this purpose. Norris had been formerly a slave-captain, but had quitted the trade, and settled as a merchant in a different line of business. He was a man of quick penetration, and of good talents, which he had cultivated to advantage, and he had a pleasing address both as to speech and manners. He received me with great politeness, and offered me all the information I desired. I was with him five or six times at his own house for this purpose. The substance of his communications on these occasions I shall now put down, and I beg the reader's particular attention to it, as he will be referred to it in other parts of this work.

With respect to the produce of Africa, Mr. Norris enumerated many articles in which a new and valuable trade might be opened, of which he gave me one, namely, the black pepper from Whidàh before mentioned. This he gave me, to use his own expressions, as one argument among many others of the impolicy of the Slave Trade, which, by turning the attention of the inhabitants to the persons of one another for sale, hindered foreigners from discovering, and themselves from cultivating, many of the valuable productions of their own soil.

On the subject of procuring slaves, he gave it as his decided opinion that many of the inhabitants of Africa were kidnapped by each other, as they were travelling on the roads, or fishing in the creeks, or cultivating their little spots. Having learned their language, he had collected the fact from various quarters, but more particularly from the accounts of slaves whom he had transported in his own vessels. With respect, however, to Whidàh, many came from thence who were reduced to slavery in a different manner. The king of Dahomey, whose life (with the wars and customs of the Dahomans) he said he was then writing, and who was a very despotic prince, made no scruple of seizing his own subjects, and of selling them, if he was in want of any of the articles which the slave-vessels would afford him. The history of this prince's life he lent me afterwards to read, while it was yet in manuscript, in which I observed that he had recorded all the facts now mentioned. Indeed he made no hesi-

tation to state them, either when we were by ourselves, or when others were in company with us. He repeated them at one time in the presence both of Mr. Cruden and Mr. Coupland. The latter was then a slave-merchant at Liverpool. He seemed to be fired at the relation of these circumstances. Unable to restrain himself longer, he entered into a defence of the trade, both as to the humanity and the policy of it; but Mr. Norris took up his arguments in both these cases, and answered them in a solid manner.

With respect to the Slave Trade as it affected the health of our seamen, Mr. Norris admitted it to be destructive; but I did not stand in need of this information, as I knew this part of the subject, in consequence of my familiarity with the muster-rolls, better than himself.

He admitted it also to be true, that they were too frequently ill-treated in this trade. A day or two after our conversation on this latter subject he brought me the manuscript journal of a voyage to Africa, which had been kept by a mate, with whom he was then acquainted. He brought it to me to read, as it might throw some light upon the subject on which we had talked last. In this manuscript various instances of cruel usage towards seamen were put down, from which it appeared that the mate, who wrote it, had not escaped himself.

At the last interview we had, he seemed to be so satisfied of the inhumanity, injustice, and impolicy of the trade, that he made me a voluntary offer of certain clauses, which he had been thinking of, and which, he believed, if put into an Act of Parliament, would judiciously effect its abolition. The offer of these clauses I embraced eagerly. He dictated them, and I wrote. I wrote them in a small book which I had then in my pocket. They were these:—

No vessel, under a heavy penalty, to supply foreigners with slaves.

Every vessel to pay to government a tax for a register on clearing out to supply our own islands with slaves.

Every such vessel to be prohibited from purchasing or bringing home any of the productions of Africa.

Every such vessel to be prohibited from bringing home a passenger, or any article of produce, from the West Indies.

A bounty to be given to every vessel trading in the natural productions of Africa. This bounty to be paid in part out of the tax arising from the registers of the slave-vessels.

Certain establishments to be made by government in Africa, in the Bananas, in the Isles de Los, on the banks of the Camaranca, and in other places, for the encouragement and support of the new trade to be substituted there.

Such then were the services, which Mr. Norris, at the request of William Rathbone, rendered me at Liverpool, during my stay there; and I have been very particular in detailing them, because I shall be obliged to allude to them, as I have before observed, on some important occasions in a future part of the work.

On going my rounds one day, I met accidentally with Captain Chaffers. This gentleman either was or had been in the West India employ. His heart had beaten in sympathy with mine, and he had greatly favoured our cause. He had seen me at Mr. Norris's, and learned my errand there. He told me he could introduce me in a few minutes, as we were then near at hand, to Captain Lace, if I chose it. Captain Lace, he said, had been long in the Slave Trade, and could give me very accurate information about it. I accepted his offer. On talking to Captain Lace, relative to the productions of Africa, he told me that mahogany grew at Calabar. He began to describe a tree of that kind, which he had seen there. This tree was from about eighteen inches to two feet in diameter, and about sixty feet high, or, as he expressed it, of the height of a tall chimney. As soon as he mentioned Calabar, a kind of horror came over me. His name became directly associated in my mind with the place. It almost instantly occurred to me, that he commanded the Edgar out of Liverpool, when the dreadful massacre there, as has been related, took place. Indeed I seemed to be so confident of it, that, attending more to my feelings than to my reason at this moment, I accused him with being concerned in it. This produced great confusion among us. For he looked incensed at

Captain Chaffers, as if he had introduced me to him for this purpose. Captain Chaffers again seemed to be all astonishment that I should have known of this circumstance, and to be vexed that I should have mentioned it in such a manner. I was also in a state of trembling myself. Captain Lace could only say it was a bad business. But he never defended himself, nor those concerned in it. And we soon parted, to the great joy of us all.

Soon after this interview, I began to perceive that I was known in Liverpool, as well as the object for which I came. Mr. Coupland, the slave-merchant, with whom I had disputed at Mr. Norris's house, had given the alarm to those who were concerned in the trade, and Captain Lace, as may be now easily imagined, had spread it. This knowledge of me and of my errand was almost immediately productive of two effects, the first of which I shall now mention.

I had a private room at the King's Arms tavern, besides my bed-room, where I used to meditate and to write; but I generally dined in public. The company at dinner had hitherto varied but little as to number, and consisted of those, both from the town and country, who had been accustomed to keep up a connexion with the house. But now things were altered, and many people came to dine there daily with a view of seeing me, as if I had been some curious creature imported from foreign parts. They thought, also, they could thus have an opportunity of conversing with me. Slave-merchants and slave-captains came in among others for this purpose. I had observed this difference in the number of our company for two or three days. Dale, the master of the tavern, had observed it also, and told me in a good-natured manner, that many of these were my visiters, and that I was likely to bring him a great deal of custom. In a little time, however, things became serious; for they, who came to see me, always started the abolition of the Slave Trade as the subject for conversation. Many entered into the justification of this trade with great warmth, as if to ruffle my temper, or at any rate to provoke me to talk. Others threw out, with the same view, that men were going about to abolish it, who would have done much better if they had stayed at home. Others said they had heard

of a person turned mad, who had conceived the thought of destroying Liverpool, and all its glory. Some gave as a toast, Success to the trade, and then laughed immoderately, and watched me when I took my glass to see if I would drink it. I saw the way in which things were now going, and I believed it would be proper that I should come to some fixed resolutions; such as, whether I should change my lodgings, and whether I should dine in private; and if not, what line of conduct it would become me to pursue on such occasions. With respect to changing my lodgings and dining in private, I conceived, if I were to do either of these things, that I should be showing an unmanly fear of my visiters, which they would turn to their own advantage. I conceived too, that, if I chose to go on as before, and to enter into conversation with them on the subject of the abolition of the Slave Trade, I might be able, by having such an assemblage of persons daily, to gather all the arguments which they could collect on the other side of our question, an advantage which I should one day feel in the future management of the cause. With respect to the line, which I should pursue in the case of remaining in the place of my abode and in my former habits, I determined never to start the subject of the abolition myself—never to abandon it when started—never to defend it but in a serious and dignified manner—and never to discover any signs of irritation, whatever provocation might be given me. By this determination I abided rigidly. The King's Arms became now daily the place for discussion on this subject. Many tried to insult me, but to no purpose. In all these discussions I found the great advantage of having brought Mr. Falconbridge with me from Bristol; for he was always at the table; and when my opponents, with a disdainful look, tried to ridicule my knowledge, among those present, by asking me if I had ever been on the coast of Africa myself, he used generally to reply, "But I have. I know all your proceedings there, and that his statements are true." These and other words put in by him, who was an athletic and resolute-looking man, were of great service to me. All disinterested persons, of whom there were four or five daily in the room, were uniformly convinced by our arguments, and took our

part, and some of them very warmly. Day after day we beat our opponents out of the field, as many of the company acknowledged, to their no small mortification, in their presence. Thus, while we served the cause by discovering all that could be said against it, we served it by giving numerous individuals proper ideas concerning it, and of interesting them in our favour.

The second effect which I experienced was, that from this time I could never get any one to come forward as an evidence to serve the cause. There were, I believe, hundreds of persons in Liverpool, and in the neighbourhood of it, who had been concerned in this traffic, and who had left it, all of whom could have given such testimony concerning it as would have insured its abolition. But none of them would now speak out. Of these, indeed, there were some, who were alive to the horrors of it, and who lamented that it should still continue. But yet even these were backward in supporting me. All that they did was just privately to see me, to tell me that I was right, and to exhort me to persevere: but as to coming forward to be examined publicly, my object was so unpopular, and would become so much more so when brought into parliament, that they would have their houses pulled down, if they should then appear as public instruments in the annihilation of the trade. With this account I was obliged to rest satisfied; nor could I deny, when I considered the spirit, which had manifested itself, and the extraordinary number of interested persons in the place, that they had some reason for their fears; and that these fears were not groundless, appeared afterwards; for Dr. Binns, a respectable physician belonging to the religious society of the Quakers, and to whom Isaac Hadwen had introduced me, was near falling into a mischievous plot, which had been laid against him, because he was one of the subscribers to the institution for the abolition of the Slave Trade, and because he was suspected of having aided me in promoting that object.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Hostile disposition towards the author increases, on account of his known patronage of the seamen employed in the Slave Trade; manner of procuring and paying them at Liverpool; their treatment and mortality.—Account of the murder of Peter Green; trouble taken by the author to trace it; his narrow escape.—Goes to Lancaster, but returns to Liverpool; leaves the latter place.

It has appeared that a number of persons used to come and see me, out of curiosity, at the King's Arms tavern; and that these manifested a bad disposition towards me, which was near breaking out into open insult. Now the cause of all this was, as I have observed, the knowledge which people had obtained relative to my errand at this place. But this hostile disposition was increased by another circumstance, which I am now to mention. I had been so shocked at the treatment of the seamen belonging to the slave-vessels at Bristol, that I determined, on my arrival at Liverpool, to institute an inquiry concerning it there also. I had made considerable progress in it, so that few seamen were landed from such vessels, but I had some communication with them; and though no one else would come near me, to give me any information about the trade, these were always forward to speak to me, and to tell me their grievances, if it were only with the hope of being able to get redress. The consequence of this was, that they used to come to the King's Arms tavern to see me. Hence, one, two, and three, were almost daily to be found about the door; and this happened quite as frequently after the hostility just mentioned had shown itself, as before. They, therefore, who came to visit me out of curiosity, could not help seeing my sailor visiters; and on inquiring into their errand, they became more than ever incensed against me.

The first result of this increased hostility towards me was an application from some of them to the master of the tavern, that he would not harbour me. This he communicated to me in a friendly manner, but he was by no means desirous that I should

leave him. On the other hand, he hoped I would stay long enough to accomplish my object. I thought it right, however, to take the matter into consideration; and having canvassed it, I resolved to remain with him, for the reasons mentioned in the former chapter. But, that I might avoid doing anything that would be injurious to his interest, as well as in some measure avoid giving unnecessary offence to others, I took lodgings in Williamson Square, where I retired to write, and occasionally to sleep, and to which place all seamen, desirous of seeing me, were referred. Hence I continued to get the same information as before, but in a less obnoxious and injurious manner.

The history of the seamen employed in the slave-vessels belonging to the port of Liverpool, I found to be similar to that of those from Bristol.

They who went into this trade were of two classes. The first consisted of those who were ignorant of it, and to whom generally improper representations of advantage had been made, for the purpose of enticing them into it. The second consisted of those who, by means of a regular system, kept up by the mates and captains, had been purposely brought by their landlords into distress, from which they could only be extricated by going into this hateful employ. How many have I seen, with tears in their eyes, put into boats, and conveyed to vessels, which were then lying at the Black Rock, and which were only waiting to receive them to sail away!

The manner of paying them in the currency of the islands was the same as at Bristol. But this practice was not concealed at Liverpool, as it was at the former place. The articles of agreement were printed, so that all who chose to buy might read them. At the same time it must be observed, that seamen were never paid in this manner in any other employ; and that the African wages, though nominally higher for the sake of procuring hands, were thus made to be actually lower than in other trades.

The loss by death was so similar, that it did not signify whether the calculation on a given number was made either at this or the other port. I had, however, a better opportunity at this than I had at the other, of knowing the loss, as it related to

those whose constitutions had been ruined, or who had been rendered incapable by disease, of continuing their occupation at sea. For the slave-vessels which returned to Liverpool, sailed immediately into the docks, so that I saw at once their sickly and ulcerated crews. The number of vessels, too, was so much greater from this, than from any other port, that their sick made a more conspicuous figure in the infirmary; and they were seen also more frequently in the streets.

With respect to their treatment, nothing could be worse. It seemed to me to be but one barbarous system from the beginning to the end. I do not say barbarous, as if premeditated, but it became so in consequence of the savage habits gradually formed by a familiarity with miserable sights, and with a course of action inseparable from the trade. Men in their first voyages usually disliked the traffic; and if they were happy enough then to abandon it, they usually escaped the disease of a hardened heart. But if they went a second and a third time, their disposition became gradually changed. It was impossible for them to be accustomed to carry away men and women by force, to keep them in chains, to see their tears, to hear their mournful lamentations, to behold the dead and the dying, to be obliged to keep up a system of severity amidst all this affliction,—in short, it was impossible for them to be witnesses, and this for successive voyages, to the complicated mass of misery passing in a slave-ship, without losing their finer feelings, or without contracting those habits of moroseness and cruelty which would brutalize their nature. Now, if we consider that persons could not easily become captains (and to these the barbarities were generally chargeable by actual perpetration, or by consent) till they had been two or three voyages in this employ, we shall see the reason why it would be almost a miracle, if they, who were thus employed in it, were not rather to become monsters, than to continue to be men.

While I was at Bristol, I heard from an officer of the Alfred, who gave me the intelligence privately, that the steward of a Liverpool ship, whose name was Green, had been murdered in that ship. The Alfred was in Bonny river at the same time, and

his own captain, (so infamous for his cruelty, as has been before shown,) was on board when it happened. The circumstances, he said, belonging to this murder, were, if report were true, of a most atrocious nature, and deserved to be made the subject of inquiry. As to the murder itself, he observed, it had passed as a notorious and uncontradicted fact.

This account was given me just as I had made an acquaintance with Mr. Falconbridge, and I informed him of it; he said he had no doubt of its truth; for in his last voyage he went to Bonny himself, where the ship was then lying, in which the transaction happened: the king and several of the black traders told him of it. The report then current was simply this, that the steward had been barbarously beaten one evening; that after this he was let down with chains upon him into a boat, which was alongside of the ship, and that the next morning he was found dead.

On my arrival at Liverpool, I resolved to inquire into the truth of this report. On looking into one of the wet docks, I saw the name of the vessel alluded to; I walked over the decks of several others, and got on board her. Two people were walking up and down her, and one was leaning upon a rail by the side. I asked the latter how many slaves this ship had carried in her last voyage; he replied he could not tell; but one of the two persons walking about could answer me, as he had sailed out and returned in her. This man came up to us, and joined in conversation. He answered my questions and many others, and would have shown me the ship, but on asking him how many seamen had died on the voyage, he changed his manner, and said, with apparent hesitation, that he could not tell. I asked him next, what had become of the steward Green. He said he believed he was dead. I asked how the seamen had been used. He said, not worse than others. I then asked whether Green had been used worse than others. He replied, he did not then recollect. I found that he was now quite upon his guard, and as I could get no satisfactory answer from him I left the ship.

On the next day I looked over the muster-roll of this vessel; on examining it, I found that sixteen of the crew had died; I found also the name of Peter Green; I found, again, that the

latter had been put down among the dead. I observed, also, that the ship had left Liverpool on the 5th of June, 1786, and had returned on the 5th of June, 1787, and that Peter Green was put down as having died on the 19th of September; from all which circumstances it was evident that he must, as my Bristol informant asserted, have died upon the Coast.

Notwithstanding this extraordinary coincidence of name, mortality, time, and place, I could gain no further intelligence about the affair till within about ten days before I left Liverpool; when among the seamen, who came to apply to me in Williamson Square was George Ormond. He came to inform me of his own ill-usage; from which circumstance I found that he had sailed in the same ship with Peter Green. This led me to inquire into the transaction in question, and I received from him the following account.

Peter Green had been shipped as steward. A black woman, of the name of Rodney, went out in the same vessel; she belonged to the owners of it, and was to be an interpretess to the slaves who should be purchased. About five in the evening, some time in the month of September, the vessel then lying in Bonny river, the captain, as was his custom, went on shore. In his absence, Rodney, the black woman, asked Green for the keys of the pantry, which he refused her, alleging that the captain had already beaten him for having given them to her on a former occasion, when she drank the wine. The woman, being passionate, struck him, and a scuffle ensued, out of which Green extricated himself as well as he could.

When the scuffle was over the woman retired to the cabin, and appeared pensive. Between eight and nine in the evening, the captain, who was attended by the captain of the Alfred, came on board; Rodney immediately ran to him, and informed him that Green had made an assault upon her. The captain, without any inquiry, beat him severely, and ordered his hands to be made fast to some bolts on the starboard side of the ship and under the half deck, and then flogged him himself, using the lashes of the cat-of-nine-tails upon his back at one time, and the double walled knot at the end of it upon his head at another; and stopping to

rest at intervals, and using each hand alternately, that he might strike with the greater severity.

The pain had now become so very severe, that Green cried out, and entreated the captain of the Alfred, who was standing by, to pity his hard case, and to intercede for him. But the latter replied, that he would have served me in the same manner. Unable to find a friend here, he called upon the chief mate; but this only made matters worse, for the captain then ordered the latter to flog him also; which he did for some time, using however only the lashes of the instrument. Green then called in his distress upon the second mate to speak for him; but the second mate was immediately ordered to perform the same cruel office, and was made to persevere in it till the lashes were all worn into threads. But the barbarity did not close here; for the captain, on seeing the instrument now become useless, ordered another, with which he flogged him as before, beating him at times over the head with the double-walled knot, and changing his hands, and cursing his own left hand for not being able to strike so severe a blow as his right.

The punishment, as inflicted by all parties, had now lasted two hours and a half, when George Ormond was ordered to cut down one of the arms, and the boatswain the other, from the places of their confinement; this being done, Green lay motionless on the deck. He attempted to utter something, Ormond understood it to be the word water; but no water was allowed him. The captain, on the other hand, said he had not yet done with him, and ordered him to be confined with his arms across, his right hand to his left foot, and his left hand to his right foot. For this purpose the carpenter brought shackles, and George Ormond was compelled to put them on. The captain then ordered some tackle to be made fast to the limbs of the said Peter Green, in which situation he was then hoisted up, and afterwards let down into a boat, which was lying alongside the ship. Michael Cunningham was then sent to loose the tackle, and to leave him there.

In the middle watch, or between one and two next morning, George Ormond looked out of one of the port-holes, and called to

Green, but received no answer. Between two and three, Paul Berry, a seaman, was sent down into the boat, and found him dead. He made his report to one of the officers of the ship. About five in the morning the body was brought up, and laid on the waist near the half-deck door. The captain on seeing the body when he rose, expressed no concern, but ordered it to be knocked out of irons, and to be buried at the usual place of interment for seamen, or Bonny Point. I may now observe, that the deceased was in good health before the punishment took place, and in high spirits; for he played upon the flute only a short time before Rodney asked him for the keys, while those seamen, who were in health, danced.

On hearing this cruel relation from George Ormond, who was throughout a material witness to the scene, I had no doubt in my own mind of the truth of it; but I thought it right to tell him at once that I had seen a person, about four weeks ago, who had been the same voyage with him and Peter Green, but yet who had no recollection of these circumstances. Upon this he looked quite astonished, and began to grow angry; he maintained he had seen the whole; he had also held the candle himself during the whole punishment. He asserted that one candle and half of another were burnt out while it lasted. He said also that, while the body lay in the waist, he had handled the abused parts, and had put three of his fingers into a hole, made by the double walled knot, in the head, from whence a quantity of blood and, he believed, brains issued. He then challenged me to bring the man before him; I desired him upon this to be cool, and to come to me the next day, and I would then talk with him again upon the subject.

In the interim I consulted the muster-roll of the vessel again; I found the name of George Ormond; he had sailed in her out of Liverpool, and had been discharged at the latter end of January in the West Indies, as he had told me. I found also the names of Michael Cunningham and of Paul Berry, whom he had mentioned. It was obvious also that Ormond's account of the captain of the Alfred being on board at the time of the punishment tallied with that given me at Bristol by an officer of that vessel, and that

his account of letting down Peter Green into the boat tallied with that which Mr. Falconbridge, as I mentioned before, had heard from the king and the black traders in Bonny river.

When he came to me next day, he came in high spirits. He said he had found out the man whom I had seen. The man, however, when he talked to him about the murder of Peter Green, acknowledged every thing concerning it. Ormond intimated that this man was to sail again in the same ship under the promise of being an officer, and that he had been kept on board, and had been enticed to a second voyage, for no other purpose than that he might be prevented from divulging the matter. I then asked Ormond, whether he thought the man would acknowledge the murder in my hearing. He replied, "that, if I were present, he thought he would not say much about it, as he was soon to be under the same captain, but that he would not deny it. If, however, I were out of sight, though I might be in hearing, he believed he would acknowledge the facts."

By the assistance of Mr. Falconbridge, I found a public-house, which had two rooms in it: nearly at the top of the partition between them was a small window, which a person might look through by standing upon a chair. I desired Ormond, one evening, to invite the man into the larger room, in which he was to have a candle, and to talk with him on the subject. I proposed to station myself in the smallest in the dark, so that by looking through the window I could both see and hear him, and yet be unperceived myself. The room, in which I was to be, was one where the dead were frequently carried to be owned. We were all in our places at the time appointed. I directly discovered that it was the same man with whom I had conversed on board the ship in the wet docks. I heard him distinctly relate many of the particulars of the murder, and acknowledge them all. Ormond, after having talked with him some time, said, "Well, then, you believe Peter Green was actually murdered?" He replied, "If Peter Green was not murdered, no man ever was." What followed I do not know. I had heard quite enough; and the room was so disagreeable in smell, that I did not choose to stay in it longer than was absolutely necessary.

I own I was now quite satisfied that the murder had taken place, and my first thought was to bring the matter before the mayor, and to take up three of the officers of the ship. But, in mentioning my intention to my friends, I was dissuaded from it. They had no doubt but that in Liverpool, as there was now a notion that the Slave Trade would become a subject of parliamentary inquiry, every effort would be made to overthrow me. They were of opinion also that such of the magistrates, as were interested in the trade, when applied to for warrants of apprehension, would contrive to give notice to the officers to escape. In addition to this they believed, that so many in the town were already incensed against me, that I should be torn to pieces, and the house where I lodged burnt down, if I were to make the attempt. I thought it right therefore to do nothing for the present; but I sent Ormond to London, to keep him out of the way of corruption, till I should make up my mind as to further proceedings on the subject.

It is impossible, if I observe the bounds I have prescribed myself, and I believe the reader will be glad of it on account of his own feelings, that I should lay open the numerous cases, which came before me at Liverpool, relative to the ill-treatment of the seamen in this wicked trade. It may be sufficient to say, that they harassed my constitution, and affected my spirits daily. They were in my thoughts on my pillow after I retired to rest, and I found them before my eyes when I awoke. Afflicting, however, as they were, they were of great use in the promotion of our cause: for they served, whatever else failed, as a stimulus to perpetual energy: they made me think light of former labours, and they urged me imperiously to new. And here I may observe, that among the many circumstances which ought to excite our joy on considering the great event of the abolition of the Slave Trade, which has now happily taken place, there are few for which we ought to be more grateful, than that from this time our commerce ceases to breed such abandoned wretches: while those, who have thus been bred in it, and who may yet find employment in other trades, will, in the common course of nature, be taken off in a given time, so that our marine will at length be purified

from a race of monsters, which have helped to cripple its strength, and to disgrace its character.

The temper of many of the interested people of Liverpool had now become still more irritable, and their hostility more apparent than before. I received anonymous letters, entreating me to leave it, or I should otherwise never leave it alive. The only effect which this advice had upon me, was to make me more vigilant when I went out at night. I never stirred out at this time without Mr. Falconbridge; and he never accompanied me without being well armed. Of this, however, I knew nothing until we had left the place. There was certainly a time when I had reason to believe that I had a narrow escape. I was one day on the pier-head with many others looking at some little boats below at the time of a heavy gale. Several persons, probably out of curiosity, were hastening thither. I had seen all I intended to see, and was departing, when I noticed eight or nine persons making towards me. I was then only about eight or nine yards from the precipice of the pier, but going from it. I expected that they would have divided to let me through them; instead of which they closed upon me and bore me back. I was borne within a yard of the precipice, when I discovered my danger; and perceiving among them the murderer of Peter Green, and two others who had insulted me at the King's Arms, it instantly struck me that they had a design to throw me over the pier-head; which they might have done at this time, and yet have pleaded that I had been killed by accident. There was not a moment to lose. Vigorous on account of the danger, I darted forward. One of them, against whom I pushed myself, fell down: their ranks were broken; and I escaped, not without blows, amidst their imprecations and abuse.

I determined now to go to Lancaster, to make some inquiries about the Slave Trade there. I had a letter of introduction to William Jepson, one of the religious society of the Quakers, for this purpose. I found from him, that, though there were slave-merchants at Lancaster, they made their outfits at Liverpool, as a more convenient port. I learnt too from others, that the captain of the last vessel, which had sailed out of Lancaster to

the coast of Africa for slaves, had taken off so many of the natives treacherously, that any other vessel known to come from it would be cut off. There were only now one or two superannuated captains living in the place. Finding I could get no oral testimony, I was introduced into the Custom-house. Here I just looked over the muster-rolls of such slave-vessels as had formerly sailed from this port; and having found that the loss of seamen was precisely in the same proportion as elsewhere, I gave myself no further trouble, but left the place.

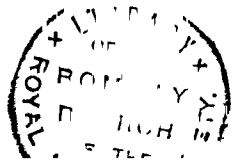
On my return to Liverpool, I was informed by Mr. Falconbridge, that a ship-mate of Ormond, of the name of Patrick Murray, who had been discharged in the West Indies, had arrived there. This man, he said, had been to call upon me in my absence, to seek redress for his own bad usage; but in the course of conversation he had confirmed all the particulars as stated by Ormond, relative to the murder of Peter Green. On consulting the muster-roll of the ship, I found his name, and that he had been discharged in the West Indies on the 2nd of February. I determined, therefore, to see him. I cross-examined him in the best manner I could. I could neither make him contradict himself, nor say anything that militated against the testimony of Ormond. I was convinced, therefore, of the truth of the transaction; and, having obtained his consent, I sent him to London to stay with the latter, till he should hear further from me. I learnt also from Mr. Falconbridge, that visiters had continued to come to the King's Arms during my absence; that they had been very liberal of their abuse of me; and that one of them did not hesitate to say (which is remarkable) that "I deserved to be thrown over the pier-head."

Finding now that I could get no further evidence; that the information which I had already obtained was considerable*; and that the committee had expressed an earnest desire, in a letter which I had received, that I would take into consideration

* In London, Bristol, and Liverpool, I had already obtained the names of more than 20,000 seamen, in different voyages, knowing what had become of each.

the propriety of writing my Essay on the *Impolicy of the Slave Trade* as soon as possible, I determined upon leaving Liverpool.

I went round accordingly and took leave of my friends. The last of these was William Rathbone, and I have to regret, that it was also the last time I ever saw him. Independently of the gratitude I owed him for assisting me in this great cause, I respected him highly as a man: he possessed a fine understanding with a solid judgment: he was a person of extraordinary simplicity of manners. Though he lived in a state of pecuniary independence, he gave an example of great temperance, as well as of great humility of mind: but however humble he appeared, he had always the courage to dare to do that which was right, however it might resist the customs or the prejudices of men. In his own line of trade, which was that of a timber-merchant on an extensive scale, he would not allow any article to be sold for the use of a slave-ship, and he always refused those, who applied to him for materials for such purposes. But it is evident that it was his intention, if he had lived, to bear his testimony still more publicly upon this subject; for an advertisement, stating the ground of his refusal to furnish anything for this traffic upon Christian principles, with a memorandum for two advertisements in the Liverpool papers, was found among his papers at his decease.



CHAPTER XIX.

Author proceeds to Manchester; finds a spirit rising among the people there for the abolition of the Slave Trade; is requested to deliver a discourse on the subject of the Slave Trade; heads of it, and extracts.—Proceeds to Keddleston, and Birmingham; finds a similar spirit at the latter place.—Revisits Bristol; new and difficult situation there.—Author crosses the Severn at night; unsuccessful termination of his journey; returns to London.

I now took my departure from Liverpool, and proceeded to Manchester, where I arrived on the Friday evening. On the Saturday morning, Mr. Thomas Walker, attended by Mr. Cooper and Mr. Bayley of Hope, called upon me. They were then strangers to me. They came, they said, having heard of my arrival, to congratulate me on the spirit which was then beginning to show itself among the people of Manchester, and of other places, on the subject of the Slave Trade, and which would unquestionably manifest itself further by breaking out into petitions to parliament for its abolition. I was much surprised at this information. I had devoted myself so entirely to my object, that I had never had time to read a newspaper since I left London. I never knew, therefore, till now, that the attention of the public had been drawn to the subject in such a manner. And as to petitions, though I myself had suggested the idea at Bridgewater, Bristol, Gloucester, and two or three other places, I had only done it provisionally, and this without either the knowledge or the consent of the committee. The news, however, as it astonished, so it almost overpowered me with joy. I rejoiced in it, because it was a proof of the general good disposition of my countrymen; because it showed me that the cause was such as needed only to be known, to be patronized; and because the manifestation of this spirit seemed to me to be an earnest, that success would ultimately follow.

The gentlemen now mentioned took me away with them, and introduced me to Mr. Thomas Phillips. We conversed, at first,

upon the discoveries made in my journey; but in a little time, understanding that I had been educated as a clergyman, they came upon me with one voice, as if it had been before agreed upon, to deliver a discourse the next day, which was Sunday, on the subject of the Slave Trade. I was always aware that it was my duty to do all that I could with propriety to serve the cause I had undertaken, and yet I found myself embarrassed at their request. Foreseeing, as I have before related, that this cause might demand my attention to it for the greatest part of my life, I had given up all thoughts of my profession. I had hitherto but seldom exercised it, and then only to oblige some friend. I doubted, too, at the first view of the thing, whether the pulpit ought to be made an engine for political purposes, though I could not but consider the Slave Trade as a mass of crimes, and therefore the effort to get rid of it as a Christian duty. I had an idea, too, that sacred matters should not be entered upon without due consideration, nor prosecuted in a hasty, but in a decorous and solemn manner. I saw besides that, as it was then two o'clock in the afternoon, and this sermon was to be forthcoming the next day, there was not sufficient time to compose it properly. All these difficulties I suggested to my new friends without any reserve. But nothing that I could urge would satisfy them. They would not hear of a refusal, and I was obliged to give my consent, though I was not reconciled to the measure.

When I went into the church it was so full that I could scarcely get to my place; for notice had been publicly given, though I knew nothing of it, that such a discourse would be delivered. I was surprised, also, to find a great crowd of black people standing round the pulpit. There might be forty or fifty of them. The text that I took, as the best to be found in such a hurry, was the following:—"Thou shalt not oppress a stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

I took an opportunity of showing, from these words, that Moses, in endeavouring to promote among the children of Israel a tender disposition towards those unfortunate strangers who had come under their dominion, reminded them of their own state

when strangers in Egypt, as one of the most forcible arguments which could be used on such an occasion. For they could not have forgotten that the Egyptians "had made them serve with rigour; that they had made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field; and that all the service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour." The argument, therefore, of Moses was simply this:—"Ye knew well, when ye were strangers in Egypt, the nature of your own feelings. Were you not made miserable by your debased situation there? But if so, you must be sensible that the stranger, who has the same heart, or the same feelings with yourselves, must experience similar suffering, if treated in a similar manner. I charge you, then, knowing this, to stand clear of the crime of his oppression."

The law, then, by which Moses commanded the children of Israel to regulate their conduct with respect to the usage of the stranger, I showed to be a law of universal and eternal obligation, and for this, among other reasons, that it was neither more nor less than the Christian law, which appeared afterwards, that we should not do that to others which we should be unwilling to have done unto ourselves.

Having gone into these statements at some length, I made an application of them in the following words:—

"This being the case, and this law of Moses being afterwards established into a fundamental precept of Christianity, I must apply it to facts of the present day, and I am sorry that I must apply it to—ourselves.

"And first,—Are there no strangers whom we oppress? I fear the wretched African will say, that he drinks the cup of sorrow, and that he drinks it at our hands. Torn from his native soil, and from his family and friends, he is immediately forced into a situation, of all others the most degrading, where he and his progeny are considered as cattle, as possessions, and as the possessions of a man to whom he never gave offence.

"It is a melancholy fact, but it can be abundantly proved, that great numbers of the unfortunate strangers, who are carried from Africa to our colonies, are fraudulently and forcibly taken

from their native soil. To descant but upon a single instance of the kind must be productive of pain to the ear of sensibility and freedom. Consider the sensations of the person, who is thus carried off by the ruffians, who have been lurking to intercept him. Separated from everything which he esteems in life, without the possibility even of bidding his friends adieu, behold him overwhelmed in tears—wringing his hands in despair—looking backwards upon the spot where all his hopes and wishes lay;—while his family at home are waiting for him with anxiety and suspense—are waiting, perhaps, for sustenance—are agitated between hope and fear—till length of absence confirms the latter, and they are immediately plunged into inconceivable misery and distress.

"If this instance, then, is sufficiently melancholy of itself, and is at all an act of oppression, how complicated will our guilt appear who are the means of snatching away thousands annually in the same manner, and who force them and their families into the same unhappy situation, without either remorse or shame!"

Having proceeded to show, in a more particular manner than I can detail here, how, by means of the Slave Trade, we oppressed the stranger, I made an inquiry into the other branch of the subject, or how far we had a knowledge of his heart.

To elucidate this point, I mentioned several specific instances out of those which I had collected in my journey, and which I could depend upon as authentic, of honour—gratitude—fidelity—filial, fraternal, and conjugal affection—and of the finest sensibility on the part of those who had been brought into our colonies from Africa in the character of slaves; and then I proceeded for a while in the following words:—

"If, then, we oppress the stranger, as I have shown, and if, by a knowledge of his heart, we find that he is a person of the same passions and feelings as ourselves, we are certainly breaking, by means of the prosecution of the Slave Trade, that fundamental principle of Christianity, which says, that we shall not do that unto another which we wish should not be done unto ourselves, and, I fear, cutting ourselves off from all expectation of the Divine blessing. For how inconsistent is our conduct! We

come into the temple of God; we fall prostrate before Him; we pray to Him, that He will have mercy upon us. But how shall He have mercy upon us, who have had no mercy upon others! We pray to Him, again, that He will deliver us from evil. But how shall He deliver us from evil, who are daily invading the rights of the injured African, and heaping misery on his head!"

I attempted, lastly, to show, that, though the sin of the Slave Trade had been hitherto a sin of ignorance, and might, therefore, have so far been winked at, yet as the crimes and miseries belonging to it became known, it would attach even to those who had no concern in it, if they suffered it to continue either without notice or reproach, or if they did not exert themselves in a reasonable manner for its suppression. I noticed particularly, the case of Tyre and Sidon, which were the Bristol and the Liverpool of those times. A direct judgment had been pronounced by the prophet Joel against these cities, and, what is remarkable, for the prosecution of this same barbarous traffic. Thus, "And what have ye to do with me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? Ye have cast lots for my people. Ye have sold a girl for wine. The children of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem, have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their own border. Behold! I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will recompense your wickedness on your own heads." Such was the language of the prophet; and Tyre and Sidon fell, as he had pointed out, when the inhabitants were either cut off, or carried into slavery.

Having thrown out these ideas to the notice of the audience, I concluded in the following words:—

"If, then, we wish to avert the heavy national judgment which is hanging over our heads, (for must we not believe that our crimes towards the innocent Africans lie recorded against us in heaven?) let us endeavour to assert their cause. Let us nobly withstand the torrent of the evil, however inveterately it may be fixed among the customs of the times; not, however, using our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness against those, who, perhaps, without due consideration, have the misfortune to be concerned in it, but upon proper motives, and in a proper spirit, as the ser-

vants of God; so that if the sun should be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, and the very heaven should fall upon us, we may fall in the general convulsion without dismay, conscious that we have done our duty in endeavouring to succour the distressed, and that the stain of the blood of Africa is not upon us."

From Manchester I proceeded to Keddleston in Derbyshire, to spend a day with Lord Scarsdale, and to show him my little collection of African productions, and to inform him of my progress since I last saw him. Here a letter was forwarded to me from the Reverend John Toogood, of Keington Magna in Dorsetshire, though I was then unknown to him. He informed me that he had addressed several letters to the inhabitants of his own county, through their provincial paper, on the subject of the Slave Trade, which letters had produced a considerable effect. It appeared, however, that, when he began them, he did not know of the formation of our committee, or that he had a single coadjutor in the cause.

From Keddleston I turned off to Birmingham, being desirous of visiting Bristol in my way to London, to see if anything new had occurred since I was there. I was introduced by letter, at Birmingham, to Sampson and Charles Lloyd, the brothers of John Lloyd, belonging to our committee, and members of the religious society of the Quakers. I was highly gratified in finding that these, in conjunction with Mr. Russell, had been attempting to awaken the attention of the inhabitants to this great subject, and that in consequence of their laudable efforts, a spirit was beginning to show itself there, as at Manchester, in favour of the abolition of the Slave Trade. The kind manner in which these received me, and the deep interest which they appeared to take in our cause, led me to an esteem for them, which, by means of subsequent visits, grew into a solid friendship.

At length I arrived at Bristol about ten o'clock on Friday morning. But what was my surprise, when almost the first thing I heard from my friend Harry Gandy was, that a letter had been despatched to me to Liverpool, nearly a week ago, requesting me immediately to repair to this place; for that in

consequence of notice from the lords of the Admiralty, advertised in the public papers, the trial of the chief mate, whom I had occasioned to be taken up at Bristol, for the murder of William Lines, was coming on at the Old Bailey, and that not an evidence was to be found. This intelligence almost paralyzed me. I cannot describe my feelings on receiving it. I reproached myself with my own obstinacy for having resisted the advice of Mr. Burges, as has been before explained. All his words now came fresh into my mind. I was terrified, too, with the apprehension that my own reputation was now at stake. I foresaw all the calumnies which would be spread, if the evidences were not forthcoming on this occasion. I anticipated, also, the injury which the cause itself might sustain, if, at our outset, as it were, I should not be able to substantiate what I had publicly advanced; and yet the mayor of Bristol had heard and determined the case,—he had not only examined, but re-examined, the evidences,—he had not only committed, but re-committed, the accused: this was the only consolation I had. I was sensible, however, amidst all these workings of my mind, that not a moment was to be lost, and I began, therefore, to set on foot an inquiry as to the absent persons.

On waiting upon the mother of William Lines, I learnt from her, that two out of four of the witnesses had been bribed by the slave-merchants, and sent to sea, that they might not be forthcoming at the time of the trial; that the two others had been tempted also, but that they had been enabled to resist the temptation; that, desirous of giving their testimony in this cause, they had gone into some coal-mine between Neath and Swansea, where they might support themselves till they should be called for; and that she had addressed a letter to them, at the request of Mr. Gandy, above a week ago, in which she had desired them to come to Bristol immediately, but that she had received no answer from them. She then concluded, either that her letter had miscarried, or that they had left the place.

I determined to lose no time, after the receipt of this intelligence; and I prevailed upon a young man, whom my friend Harry Gandy had recommended to me, to set off directly, and to

go in search of them. He was to travel all night, and to bring them, or, if weary himself with his journey, to send them up, without ever sleeping on the road. It was now between twelve and one in the afternoon. I saw him depart. In the interim I went to Thompson's, and other places, to inquire if any other of the seamen, belonging to the Thomas, were to be found; but, though I hunted diligently till four o'clock, I could learn nothing satisfactory. I then went to dinner, but I grew uneasy. I was fearful that my messenger might be at a loss, or that he might want assistance on some occasion or other. I now judged that it would have been more prudent if two persons had been sent, who might have conferred with each other, and who might have divided, when they had reached Neath, and gone to different mines, to inquire for the witnesses. These thoughts disturbed me. Those, also, which had occurred when I first heard of the vexatious way in which things were situated, renewed themselves painfully to my mind. My own obstinacy in resisting the advice of Mr. Burges, and the fear of injury to my own reputation, and to that of the cause I had undertaken, were again before my eyes. I became still more uneasy: and I had no way of relieving my feelings, but by resolving to follow the young man, and to give him all the aid in my power.

It was now near six o'clock. The night was cold and rainy and almost dark. I got down, however, safe to the passage-house, and desired to be conveyed across the Severn. The people in the house tried to dissuade me from my design. They said no one would accompany me, for it was quite a tempest. I replied that I would pay those handsomely who would go with me. A person present asked me if I would give him three guineas for a boat. I replied I would. He could not for shame retract. He went out, and in about half an hour brought a person with him. We were obliged to have a lanthorn as far as the boat. We got on board, and went off. But such a passage I had never before witnessed. The wind was furious. The waves ran high. I could see nothing but white foam. The boat, also, was tossed up and down in such a manner that it was with great difficulty I could keep my seat. The rain, too, poured down in such torrents

that we were all of us presently wet through. We had been, I apprehend, more than an hour in this situation, when the boatmen began to complain of cold and weariness. I saw, also, that they began to be uneasy, for they did not know where they were. They had no way of forming any judgment about their course, but by knowing the point from whence the wind blew, and by keeping the boat in a relative position towards it. I encouraged them as well as I could, though I was beginning to be uneasy myself, and also sick. In about a quarter of an hour they began to complain again. They said they could pull no longer. They acknowledged, however, that they were getting nearer to the shore, though on what part of it they could not tell. I could do nothing but bid them hope. They then began to reproach themselves for having come out with me. I told them I had not forced them, but that it was a matter of their own choice. In the midst of this conversation I informed them that I thought I saw either a star or a light straight forward. They both looked at it and pronounced it to be a light, and added with great joy that it must be a light in the Passage-house; and so we found it; for in about ten minutes afterwards we landed, and, on reaching the house, learnt that a servant maid had been accidentally talking to some other person on the stair-case, near a window, with a candle in her hand, and that the light had appeared to us from that circumstance.

It was now near eleven o'clock. My messenger, it appeared, had arrived safe about five in the evening, and had proceeded on his route. I was very cold on my arrival, and sick also. There seemed to be a chilliness all over me, both within and without. Indeed I had not a dry thread about me. I took some hot brandy and water, and went to bed; but desired, as soon as my clothes were thoroughly dried, to be called up, that I might go forward. This happened at about two in the morning, when I got up. I took my breakfast by the fire-side. I then desired the post-boy, if he should meet any persons on the road, to stop and inform me, as I did not know whether the witnesses might not be coming up by themselves, and whether they might not have passed my messenger without knowing his errand. Having

taken these precautions, I departed. I travelled on, but we met no one. I traced, however, my messenger through Newport, Cardiff, and Cowbridge. I was assured, also, that he had not passed me on his return; nor had any of those passed me whom he was seeking. At length, when I was within about two miles of Neath I met him. He had both the witnesses under his care. This was a matter of great joy to me. I determined to return with them. It was now nearly two in the afternoon. I accordingly went back, but we did not reach the Passage-house again till nearly two the next morning.

During our journey, neither the wind nor the rain had much abated. It was quite dark on our arrival. We found only one person, and he had been sitting up in expectation of us. It was in vain that I asked him for a boat to put us across the water. He said all the boatmen were in bed; and, if they were up, he was sure that none of them would venture out. It was thought a mercy by all of them that we were not lost last night. Difficulties were also started about horses to take us another way. Unable, therefore, to proceed, we took refreshment and went to bed.

We arrived at Bristol between nine and ten the next morning; but I was so ill that I could go no further; I had been cold and shivering ever since my first passage across the Severn; and I had now a violent sore throat and a fever with it. All I could do was to see the witnesses off for London, and to assign them to the care of an attorney, who should conduct them to the trial. For this purpose I gave them a letter to a friend of the name of Langdale. I saw them depart. The mother of William Lines accompanied them. By a letter received on Tuesday, I learnt that they had not arrived in town till Monday morning at three o'clock; that at about nine or ten they found out the office of Mr. Langdale; that, on inquiring for him, they heard he was in the country, but that he would be home at noon; that, finding he had not then arrived, they acquainted his clerk with the nature of their business, and opened my letter to show him the contents of it; that the clerk went with them to consult some other person on the subject, when he conveyed them to the Old Bailey;

but that, on inquiring at the proper place about the introduction of the witnesses, he learnt that the chief mate had been brought to the bar in the morning, and, no person then appearing against him, that he had been discharged by proclamation. Such was the end of all my anxiety and labour in this affair. I was very ill when I received the letter; but I saw the necessity of bearing up against the disappointment, and I endeavoured to discharge the subject from my mind with the following wish, that the narrow escape which the chief mate had experienced, and which was entirely owing to the accidental circumstances now explained, might have the effect, under Providence, of producing in him a deep contrition for his offence, and of awakening him to a serious attention to his future life*.

I was obliged to remain in Bristol a few days longer in consequence of my illness; but as soon as I was able I reached London, when I attended a sitting of the committee after an absence of more than five months. At this committee it was strongly recommended to me to publish a second edition of my *Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*, and to insert such of the facts in it in their proper places, out of those collected in my late travels, as I might judge to be productive of an interesting effect. There appeared, also, an earnest desire in the committee, that, directly after this, I should begin my *Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave Trade.*

In compliance with their wishes, I determined upon both these works; but I resolved to retire into the country, that, by being subject to less interruption there, I might the sooner finish them. It was proper, however, that I should settle many things in London before I took my departure from it; and, among these, that I should find out George Ormond and Patrick Murray, whom I had sent from Liverpool on account of the information they had given me relative to the murder of Peter Green. I saw no better way than to take them before Sir Sampson Wright, who was

* He had undoubtedly a narrow escape; for Mr. Langdale's clerk had learnt that he had no evidence to produce in his favour. The slave-merchants, it seems, had counted most upon bribing those who were to come against him, to disappear.

then at the head of the police of the metropolis. He examined and cross-examined them several times, and apart from each other. He then desired their evidence to be drawn up in the form of depositions, copies of which he gave to me. He had no doubt that the murder would be proved. The circumstances of the deceased being in good health at nine o'clock in the evening, and of his severe sufferings till eleven, and of the nature of the wounds discovered to have been made on his person, and of his death by one in the morning, could never, he said, be done away by any evidence who should state that he had been subject to other disorders which might have occasioned his decease. He found himself, therefore, compelled to apply to the magistrates of Liverpool, for the apprehension of three of the principal officers of the ship; but the answer was that the ship had sailed, and that they whose names had been specified were then, none of them, to be found in Liverpool.

It was now for me to consider whether I would keep the two witnesses, Ormond and Murray, for a year, or perhaps longer, at my own expense, and run the hazard of the death of the officers in the interim, and of other calculable events. I had felt so deeply for the usage of the seamen in this cruel traffic, which indeed had embittered all my journey, that I had no less than nine prosecutions at law upon my hands on their account, and nineteen witnesses detained at my own cost. The committee in London could give me no assistance in these cases. They were the managers of the public purse for the abolition of the Slave Trade, and any expenses of this kind were neither within the limits of their object, nor within the pale of their duty. From the individuals belonging to it, I picked up a few guineas by way of private subscription, and this was all. But a vast load still remained upon me, and such as had occasioned uneasiness to my mind. I thought it, therefore, imprudent to detain the evidences for this purpose for so long a time, and I sent them back to Liverpool. I commenced, however, a prosecution against the captain at common law for his barbarous usage of them, and desired that it might be pushed on as vigorously as possible; and the result was, that his attorney was so alarmed, particularly after

knowing what had been done by Sir Sampson Wright, that he entered into a compromise to pay all the expenses of the suit hitherto incurred, and to give Ormond and Murray a sum of money as damages for the injury which they themselves had sustained. This compromise was acceded to. The men received the money, and signed the release, (of which I insisted upon a copy,) and went to sea again in another trade, thanking me for my interference in their behalf. But by this copy, which I have now in my possession, it appears that care was taken by the captain's attorney to render their future evidence in the case of Peter Green almost impracticable; for it was there wickedly stated, "that George Ormond and Patrick Murray did then and there bind themselves in certain penalties that they would neither encourage nor support any action at law against the said captain, by or at the suit or prosecution of any other of the seamen now or late on board the said ship, and that they released the said captain also from all manner of actions, suits, and cause and causes of action, informations, prosecutions, and other proceedings which they then had, or ever had, or could or might have, by reason of the said assaults upon their own persons, or *other wrongs or injuries done by the said captain heretofore and to the date of this release**."

* None of the nine actions before mentioned ever came to a trial; but they were all compromised by paying sums to the injured parties.

CHAPTER XX.

Labours of the committee during the author's journey; Quakers the first to notice its institution; General Baptists the next.—Correspondence opened with American societies for Abolition.—First individual who addressed the committee was Mr. William Smith.—Thanks voted to Ramsay.—Committee prepares lists of persons to whom to send its publications; Barclay, Taylor, and Wedgwood, elected members of the committee.—Letters from Brissot and others.—Granville Sharp elected chairman.—Seal ordered to be engraved.—Letters from different correspondents, as they offered their services to the committee.

The committee, during my absence, had attended regularly at their posts; they had been both vigilant and industrious; they were, in short, the persons who had been the means of raising the public spirit which I had observed first at Manchester, and afterwards as I journeyed on. It will be proper, therefore, that I should now say something of their labours, and of the fruits of them: and if, in doing this, I should be more minute for a few pages than some would wish, I must apologize for myself by saying, that there are others who would be sorry to lose the knowledge of the particular manner in which the foundation was laid, and the superstructure advanced, of a work which will make so brilliant an appearance in our history, as that of the abolition of the Slave Trade.

The committee having dispersed five hundred circular letters, giving an account of their institution in London and its neighbourhood, the Quakers were the first to notice it. This they did in their yearly epistle, of which the following is an extract:—"We have also thankfully to believe there is a growing attention in many, not of our religious society, to the subject of negro slavery; and that the minds of the people are more and more enlarged to consider it as an aggregate of every species of evil, and to see the utter inconsistency of upholding it by the authority of any nation whatever, especially of such as punish, with loss of life, crimes whose magnitude bears scarce any proportion to this complicated iniquity."

The General Baptists were the next; for on the 22nd of June, Stephen Lowdell and Dan Taylor attended as a deputation from the annual meeting of that religious body, to inform the committee, that those whom they represented approved their proceedings, and that they would countenance the object of their institution.

The first individual who addressed the committee was Mr. William Smith, the late member for Norwich. In his letter, he expressed the pleasure he had received in finding persons associated in the support of a cause in which he himself had taken a deep interest. He gave them advice as to their future plans. He promised them all the co-operation in his power: and he exhorted them not to despair, even if their first attempt should be unsuccessful; "for consolation," says he, "will not be wanting. You may rest satisfied that the attempt will be productive of some good; that the fervent wishes of the righteous will be on your side, and that the blessing of those who are ready to perish will fall upon you." And as Mr. Smith was the first person to address the committee as an individual after its formation, so, next to Mr. Wilberforce and the members of it, he gave the most time and attention to the promotion of the cause.

On the 5th of July, the committee opened a correspondence, by means of William Dillwyn, with the societies of Philadelphia and New York, of whose institution an account has been given. At this sitting a due sense was signified of the services of Mr. Ramsay, and a desire of his friendly communications when convenient.

The two next meetings were principally occupied in making out lists of the names of persons in the country, to whom the committee should send their publications for distribution. For this purpose, every member was to bring in an account of those whom he knew personally, and whom he believed not only to be willing, but qualified on account of their judgment and the weight of their character, to take an useful part in the work which was to be assigned to them. It is a remarkable circumstance, that when the lists were arranged, the committee, few as

they were, found they had friends in no less than thirty-nine counties*, in each of which there were several, so that a knowledge of their institution could now be soon diffusively spread.

The committee having now fixed upon their correspondents, ordered five hundred of the circular letters which have been before mentioned, and five thousand of the *Summary View*, an account of which has been given also, to be printed.

On account of the increase of business, which was expected in consequence of the circulation of the preceding publications, Robert Barclay, John Vickris Taylor, and Josiah Wedgwood, Esq., were added to the committee; and it was then resolved, that any three members might call a meeting when necessary.

On the 27th of August, the new correspondents began to make their appearance. This sitting was distinguished by the receipt of letters from two celebrated persons. The first was from Brissot, dated Paris, August the 18th, who, it may be recollected, was an active member of the National Convention of France, and who suffered in the persecution of Robespierre. The second was from Mr. John Wesley, whose useful labours as a minister of the Gospel, are so well known to our countrymen.

Brissot, in his letter, congratulated the members of the committee, on having come together for so laudable an object. He offered his own assistance towards the promotion of it. He desired, also, that his valuable friend Claviere (who suffered also under Robespierre) might be joined to him, and that both might be acknowledged by the committee, as associates in what he called this heavenly work. He purposed to translate and circulate through France such publications as they might send him from time to time; and to appoint bankers in Paris, who might receive subscriptions, and remit them to London, for the good of their common cause. In the mean time, if his own countrymen should be found to take an interest in this great cause, it was not improbable that a committee might be formed in Paris, to endeavour

* The Quakers, by means of their discipline, have a greater personal knowledge of each other, than the members of any other religious society. But two-thirds of the committee were Quakers, and hence the circumstance is explained. Hence also nine-tenths of our first coadjutors were Quakers.

to secure the attainment of the same object from the government in France.

The thanks of the committee were voted to Brissot for this disinterested offer of his services, and he was elected an honorary and corresponding member. In reply, however, to his letter, it was stated that, as the committee had no doubt of procuring from the generosity of their own nation sufficient funds for effecting the object of their institution, they declined the acceptance of any pecuniary aid from the people of France; but recommended him to attempt the formation of a committee in his own country, and to inform them of his progress, and to make to them such other communications as he might deem necessary upon the subject from time to time.

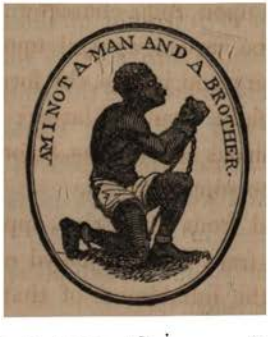
Mr. Wesley, whose letter was read next, informed the committee of the great satisfaction which he also had experienced, when he heard of their formation. He conceived that their design, while it would destroy the Slave Trade, would also strike at the root of the shocking abomination of slavery also. He desired to forewarn them that they must expect difficulties and great opposition from those who were interested in the system; that these were a powerful body; and that they would raise all their forces, when they perceived their craft to be in danger. They would employ hireling writers, who would have neither justice nor mercy. But the committee were not to be dismayed by such treatment, nor even if some of those who professed good-will towards them, should turn against them. As for himself, he would do all he could to promote the object of their institution. He would reprint a new and large edition of his *Thought on Slavery*, and circulate it among his friends in England and Ireland, to whom he would add a few words in favour of their design. And then he concluded in these words: "I commend you to Him who is able to carry you through all opposition, and support you under all discouragements."

On the 4th, 11th, and 18th of September, the committee were employed variously. Among other things, they voted their thanks to Mr. Leigh, a clergyman of the Established Church, for the offer of his services for the county of Norfolk. They

ordered, also, one thousand of the circular letters to be additionally printed.

At one of these meetings a resolution was made, that Granville Sharp, Esq. be appointed chairman. This appointment, though now first formally made in the minute book, was always understood to have taken place; but the modesty of Mr. Sharp was such that, though repeatedly pressed, he would never consent to take the chair; and he generally refrained from coming into the room till after he knew it to be taken. Nor could he be prevailed upon, even after this resolution, to alter his conduct: for though he continued to sign the papers, which were handed to him by virtue of holding this office, he never was once seated as the chairman, during the twenty years in which he attended at these meetings. I thought it not improper to mention this trait in his character. Conscious that he engaged in the cause of his fellow-creatures, solely upon the sense of his duty as a Christian, he seems to have supposed either that he had done nothing extraordinary to merit such a distinction, or to have been fearful lest the acceptance of it should bring a stain upon the motive, on which alone he undertook it.

On the 2nd and 16th of October two sittings took place; at the latter of which a sub-committee, which had been appointed for the purpose, brought in a design for a seal. An African was seen, (as in the figure*,) in chains, in a supplicating posture,



kneeling with one knee upon the ground, and with both his hands lifted up to heaven, and round the seal was observed the

* The figure is rather larger than that in the seal.

following motto, as if he was uttering the words himself,—"Am I not a Man and a Brother?" The design having been approved of, a seal was ordered to be engraved from it. I may mention here that this seal, simple as the design was, was made to contribute largely, as will be shown in its proper place, towards turning the attention of our countrymen to the case of the injured Africans, and of procuring a warm interest in their favour.

On the 30th of October several letters were read: one of these was from Brissot and Claviere conjointly; in this they acknowledged the satisfaction they had received on being considered as associates in the humane work of the abolition of the Slave Trade, and correspondents in France for the promotion of it. They declared it to be their intention to attempt the establishment of a committee there, on the same principles as that in England: but, in consequence of the different constitutions of the two governments, they gave the committee reason to suppose, that their proceedings must be different, as well as slower than those in England, for the same object.

A second letter was read from Mr. John Wesley. He said that he had now read the publications which the committee had sent him, and that he took, if possible, a still deeper interest in their cause. He exhorted them to more than ordinary diligence and perseverance; to be prepared for opposition; to be cautious about the manner of procuring information and evidence, that no stain might fall upon their character; and to take care that the question should be argued, as well upon the consideration of interest as of humanity and justice, the former of which he feared would have more weight than the latter; and he recommended them and their glorious concern, as before, to the protection of Him who was able to support them.

Letters were read from Dr. Price, approving the institution of the committee; from Charles Lloyd of Birmingham, stating the interest which the inhabitants of that town were taking in it; and from William Russell, Esq. of the same place, stating the same circumstance, and that he would co-operate with the former in calling a public meeting, and in doing whatever else

was necessary for the promotion of so good a cause. A letter was read also from Manchester, signed conjointly by George Barton Thomas Cooper, John Ferriar, Thomas Walker, Thomas Phillips, Thomas Butterworth Bayley, and George Lloyd, Esqrs., promising their assistance from that place. Two others were read from John Kerrich, Esq., of Harleston, and from Joshua Grigby, Esq., of Drinkston, each tendering their services, one for the county of Norfolk, and the other for the county of Suffolk. The latter concluded by saying, "With respect to myself, in no possible instance of my public conduct can I receive so much sincere satisfaction, as I shall, by the vote I will most assuredly give in parliament, in support of this most worthy effort to suppress a traffic, which is contrary to all the feelings of humanity, and the laws of our religion."

A letter was read also at this sitting from Major Cartwright, of Marnham, in which he offered his own services, in conjunction with those of the Rev. John Charlesworth, of Ossington, for the county of Nottingham.

"I congratulate you," says he, in this letter, "on the happy prospect of some considerable step at least being taken, towards the abolition of a traffic, which is not only impious in itself, but of all others tends most to vitiate the human mind.

"Although procrastination is generally pernicious in cases depending upon the feelings of the heart, I should almost fear that, without very uncommon exertions, you will scarcely be prepared early in the next sessions, for bringing the business into parliament with the greatest advantage. But, be that as it may, let the best use be made of the intermediate time; and then, if there be a superintending Providence, which governs everything in the moral world, there is every reason to hope for a blessing on this particular work."

The last letter was from Robert Boucher Nickolls, dean of Middleham, in Yorkshire. In this he stated that he was a native of the West Indies, and had travelled on the continent of America. He then offered some important information to the committee as his mite, towards the abolition of the Slave Trade,

and as an encouragement to them to persevere. He attempted to prove, that the natural increase of the negroes already in the West Indian islands would be fully adequate to the cultivation of them, without any fresh supplies from Africa; and that such natural increase would be secured by humane treatment. With this view, he instanced the two estates of Mr. Mac.Mahon and of Dr. Mapp, in the island of Barbados. The first required continual supplies of new slaves, in consequence of the severe and cruel usage adopted upon it. The latter overflowed with labourers in consequence of a system of kindness, so that it almost peopled another estate. Having related these instances, he cited others in North America, where, though the climate was less favourable to the constitution of the Africans, but their treatment better, they increased also. He combated, from his own personal knowledge, the argument, that self-interest was always sufficient to insure good usage, and maintained that there was only one way of securing it, which was the entire abolition of the Slave Trade. He showed in what manner the latter measure would operate to the desired end: he then dilated on the injustice and inconsistency of this trade, and supported the policy of the abolition of it, both to the planter, the merchant, and the nation.

This letter of the Dean of Middleham, which was a little Essay of itself, was deemed of so much importance by the committee, but particularly as it was the result of local knowledge, that they not only passed a resolution of thanks to him for it, but desired his permission to print it.

The committee sat again on the 13th and 22nd of November. At the first of these sittings, a letter was read from Henry Grimston, Esq., of Whitwell Hall, near York, offering his services for the promotion of the cause in his own county. At the second, the Dean of Middleham's answer was received. He acquiesced in the request of the committee; when five thousand of his letters were ordered immediately to be printed.

On the 22nd a letter was read from Mr. James Mackenzie, of the town of Cambridge, desiring to forward the object of the institution there. Two letters were read also, one from the late Mr.

Jones, tutor of Trinity College, and the other from Mr. William Frend, fellow of Jesus College. It appeared from these, that the gentlemen of the University of Cambridge were beginning to take a lively interest in the abolition of the Slave Trade, among whom Dr. Watson, the bishop of Llandaff, was particularly conspicuous. At this committee two thousand new *Summary View* were ordered to be printed, and the circular letter to be prefixed to each.

CHAPTER XXI.

Labours of the committee continued to February, 1788.—Committee elect new members; vote thanks to Falconbridge and others; receive letters from Grove and others; circulate numerous publications; make a report; send circular letters to corporate bodies; release negroes unjustly detained; find new correspondents in Archdeacon Paley, the Marquis de la Fayette, Bishop of Cloyne, Bishop of Peterborough, and in many others.

THE labours of the committee, during my absence, were as I have now explained them; but as I was obliged, almost immediately on joining them, to retire into the country to begin my new work, I must give an account of their further services till I joined them again, or till the middle of February, 1788.

During sittings which were held from the middle of December, 1787, to the 18th of January, 1788, the business of the committee had so increased, that it was found proper to make an addition to their number. Accordingly James Martin and William Morton Pitt, Esquires, members of parliament, and Robert Hunter, and Joseph Smith, Esquires, were chosen members of it.

The knowledge also of the institution of the society had spread to such an extent, and the eagerness among individuals to see the publications of the committee had been so great, that the press was kept almost constantly going during the time now mentioned. No fewer than three thousand lists of the subscribers, with a circular letter prefixed to them, explaining the object of the institution, were ordered to be printed within this period, to which are to be added fifteen hundred of BENEZET'S *Account of Guinea*, three thousand of the DEAN of MIDDLEHAM'S *Letters*, five thousand *Summary View*, and two thousand of a new edition of the *Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*, which I had enlarged before the last of these sittings from materials collected in my late tour.

The thanks of the committee were voted during this period to Mr. Alexander Falconbridge, for the assistance he had given me in my inquiries into the nature of the Slave Trade.

As Mr. Falconbridge had but lately returned from Africa, and as facts and circumstances, which had taken place but a little time ago, were less liable to objections (inasmuch as they proved the present state of things) than those which happened in earlier times, he was prevailed upon to write an account of what he had seen during the four voyages he had made to that continent; and accordingly, within the period which has been mentioned, he began his work.

The committee, during these sittings, kept up a correspondence with those gentlemen who were mentioned in the last chapter to have addressed them. But, besides these, they found other voluntary correspondents in the following persons, Capell Lofft, Esq., of Troston, and the Reverend R. Brome, of Ipswich, both in the county of Suffolk. These made an earnest tender of their services for those parts of the county in which they resided. Similar offers were made by Mr. Hammond, of Stanton, near St. Ives, in the county of Huntingdon, by Thomas Parker, Esq., of Beverly, and by William Grove, Esq., of Litchfield, for their respective towns and neighbourhoods.

A letter was received also within this period from the society established at Philadelphia, accompanied with documents in proof of the good effects of the manumission of slaves, and with specimens of writing and drawing by the same. In this letter the society congratulated the committee in London on its formation, and professed its readiness to co-operate in any way in which it could me made useful.

During these sittings, a letter was also read from Dr. Bathurst, afterwards bishop of Norwich, dated Oxford, December 17th, in which he offered his services in the promotion of the cause.

Another was read, which stated that Dr. Horne, president of Magdalen College in the same university, and afterwards bishop of the same see as the former, highly favoured it.

Another was read from Mr. Lambert, fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, in which he signified to the committee the great desire he had to promote the object of their institution. He had drawn up a number of queries relative to the state of the unhappy slaves in the islands, which he had transmitted to a friend, who

had resided in them, to answer. These answers he purposed to forward to the committee on their arrival.

Another was read from Dr. Hinchliffe, bishop of Peterborough, in which he testified his hearty approbation of the institution, and of the design of it, and his determination to support the object of it in parliament. He gave in at the same time a plan, which he called *Thoughts on the Means of Abolishing the Slave Trade in Great Britain and in our West Indian Islands*, for the consideration of the committee.

At the last of these sittings, the committee thought it right to make a report to the public relative to the state and progress of their cause; but as this was composed from materials which the reader has now in his possession, it may not be necessary to produce it.

On the 22nd and 29th of January, and on the 5th and 12th of February, 1788, sittings were also held. During these, the business still increasing, John Maitland, Esq., was elected a member of the committee.

As the correspondents of the committee were now numerous, and as these solicited publications for the use of those who applied to them, as well as of those to whom they wished to give a knowledge of the subject, the press was kept in constant employ during this period also. Five thousand two hundred and fifty additional *Reports* were ordered to be printed, and also three thousand of Falconbridge's *Account of the Slave Trade*, the manuscript of which was now finished. At this time, Mr. Newton, rector of St. Mary Woolnoth in London, who had been in his youth to the coast of Africa, but who had now become a serious and useful divine, felt it his duty to write his *Thoughts on the African Slave Trade*. The committee, having obtained permission, printed three thousand copies of these also.

During these sittings, the chairman was requested to have frequent communication with Dr. Porteus, bishop of London, as he had expressed his desire of becoming useful to the institution.

A circular letter also, with the report before mentioned, was ordered to be sent to the mayors of several corporate towns.

A case also occurred, which it may not be improper to notice.

The treasurer reported that he had been informed by the chairman, that the captain of the Albion, merchant ship, trading to the Bay of Honduras, had picked up at sea, from a Spanish ship, which had been wrecked, two black men, one named Henry Martin Burrowes, a free native of Antigua, who had served in the royal navy, and the other named Antonio Berrat, a Spanish negro; that the said captain detained these men on board his ship, then lying in the river Thames, against their will; and that he would not give them up. Upon this report, it was resolved that the cause of these unfortunate captives should be espoused by the committee. Mr. Sharp accordingly caused a writ of habeas-corpus to be served upon them; soon after which he had the satisfaction of reporting, that they had been delivered from the place of their confinement.

During these sittings the following letters were read also:—

One from Richard How, of Apsley, offering his services to the committee.

Another from the Reverend Christopher Wyvill, of Burton Hall, in Yorkshire, to the same effect.

Another from Archdeacon Plymley, (afterwards Corbett,) in which he expressed the deep interest he took in this cause of humanity and freedom, and the desire he had of making himself useful as far as he could towards the support of it; and he wished to know, as the Clergy of the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry were anxious to espouse it also, whether a petition to parliament from them, as a part of the Established Church, would not be desirable at the present season.

Another from Archdeacon Paley, containing his sentiments on a plan for the abolition of the Slave Trade, and the manumission of slaves in our islands, and offering his future services, and wishing success to the undertaking.

Another from Dr. Sharp, prebendary of Durham, inquiring into the probable amount of the subscriptions which might be wanted, and for what purposes, with a view of serving the cause.

Another from Dr. Woodward, bishop of Cloyne, in which he approved of the institution of the committee. He conceived the Slave Trade to be no less disgraceful to the legislature and inju-

rious to the true commercial interests of the country, than it was productive of unmerited misery to the unhappy objects of it, and repugnant both to the principles and the spirit of the Christian religion. He wished to be placed among the assertors of the liberty of his fellow-creatures, and he was therefore desirous of subscribing largely, as well as of doing all he could, both in England and Ireland, for the promotion of such a charitable work.

A communication was made, soon after the reading of the last letter, through the medium of the Chevalier de Ternant, from the celebrated Marquis de la Fayette of France. The Marquis signified the singular pleasure he had received on hearing of the formation of a committee in England for the abolition of the Slave Trade, and the earnest desire he had to promote the object of it. With this view, he informed the committee that he should attempt the formation of a similar society in France. This he conceived to be one of the most effectual measures he could devise for securing the object in question; for he was of opinion, that if the two great nations of France and England were to unite in this humane and Christian work, the other European nations might be induced to follow the example.

The committee, on receiving the two latter communications, resolved, that the chairman should return their thanks to the Bishop of Cloyne, and the Marquis de la Fayette, and the Chevalier de Ternant, and that he should inform them, that they were enrolled among the honorary and corresponding members of the society.

The other letters read during these sittings were to convey information to the committee, that people in various parts of the kingdom had then felt themselves so deeply interested in behalf of the injured Africans, that they had determined either on public meetings, or had come to resolutions, or had it in contemplation to petition parliament, for the abolition of the Slave Trade. Information was signified to this effect by Thomas Walker, Esquire, for Manchester; by John Hoyland, William Hoyles, Esquire, and the Reverend James Wilkinson, for Sheffield; by William Tuke, and William Burgh, Esquire, for York; by the Reverend Mr. Foster, for Colchester; by Joseph Harford and Edmund Griffith,

Esquires, for Bristol; by William Bishop, Esquire, the mayor, for Maidstone; by the Reverend R. Brome and the Reverend J. Wright, for Ipswich; by James Clarke, Esquire, the mayor, for Coventry; by Mr. Jones, of Trinity College, for the University of Cambridge; by Dr. Schomberg, of Magdalen College, for the University of Oxford; by Henry Bullen, Esquire, for Bury St. Edmunds; by Archdeacon Travis, for Chester; by Mr. Hammond, for the county of Huntingdon; by John Flint, Esquire, (afterwards Corbett,) for the town of Shrewsbury and county of Salop; by the Reverend Robert Lucas, for the town and also for the county of Northampton; by Mr. Winchester, for the county of Stafford; by the Reverend William Leigh, for the county of Norfolk; by David Barclay, for the county of Hertford; and by Thomas Babington, Esquire, for the county of Leicester.

CHAPTER XXII.

Further progress to the middle of May.—Petitions begin to be sent to parliament.—The king orders the privy council to inquire into the Slave Trade.—Author called up to town; his interviews with Mr. Pitt, and with Mr. (afterwards Lord) Grenville.—Liverpool delegates examined first; these prejudice the council; this prejudice at length counteracted.—Labours of the committee in the interim.—Public anxious for the introduction of the question into parliament.—Message of Mr. Pitt to the committee concerning it.—Day fixed for the motion.—Substance of the debate which followed.—Discussion of the general question deferred till the next sessions.

By this time the nature of the Slave Trade had, in consequence of the labours of the committee and of their several correspondents, become generally known throughout the kingdom. It had excited a general attention, and there was among the people a general feeling in behalf of the wrongs of Africa. This feeling had also, as may be collected from what has been already mentioned, broken out into language: for not only had the traffic become the general subject of conversation, but public meetings had taken place, in which it had been discussed, and of which the result was, that an application to parliament had been resolved upon in many places concerning it. By the middle of February not fewer than thirty-five petitions had been delivered to the Commons, and it was known that others were on their way to the same house.

This ferment in the public mind, which had shown itself in the public prints even before the petitions had been resolved upon, had excited the attention of government. To coincide with the wishes of the people on this subject, appeared to those in authority to be a desirable thing. To abolish the trade, replete as it was with misery, was desirable also; but it was so connected with the interest of individuals, and so interwoven with the commerce and revenue of the country, that a hasty abolition of it without a previous iuquiry appeared to them to be likely to be productive of as much misery as good. The king, therefore, by an order of council, dated February the eleventh, 1788, directed

that a committee of Privy Council should sit as a board of trade, "to take into their consideration the present state of the African Trade, particularly as far as related to the practice and manner of purchasing or obtaining slaves on the coast of Africa, and the importation and sale thereof, either in the British colonies and settlements, or in the foreign colonies and settlements in America or the West-Indies; and also as far as related to the effects and consequences of the trade both in Africa and in the said colonies and settlements, and to the general commerce of this kingdom; and that they should report to him in council the result of their inquiries, with such observations as they might have to offer thereupon."

Of this order of council Mr. Wilberforce, who had attended to this great subject, as far as his health would permit, since I left him, had received notice; but he was then too ill himself to take any measures concerning it. He therefore wrote to me, and begged of me to repair to London immediately, in order to get such evidence ready as we might think it eligible to introduce when the council sat. At that time, as appears from the former chapter, I had finished the additions to my *Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*, and I had now proceeded about half way in that of the Impolicy of it. This summons, however, I obeyed, and returned to town on the fourteenth of February, from which day to the twenty-fourth of May I shall now give the history of our proceedings.

My first business in London was to hold a conversation with Mr. Pitt previously to the meeting of the council, and to try to interest him, as the first minister of state, in our favour. For this purpose Mr. Wilberforce had opened the way for me, and an interview took place. We were in free conversation together for a considerable time, during which we went through most of the branches of the subject. Mr. Pitt appeared to me to have but little knowledge of it. He had also his doubts, which he expressed openly, on many points. He was at a loss to conceive how private interest should not always restrain the master of the slave from abusing him. This matter I explained to him as well as I could; and if he was not entirely satisfied with my inter-

pretation of it, he was at least induced to believe that cruel practices were more probable than he had imagined. A second circumstance, of the truth of which he doubted, was the mortality and usage of seamen in this trade; and a third was the statement by which so much had been made of the riches of Africa, and of the genius and abilities of her people; for he seemed at a loss to comprehend, if these things were so, how it happened that they should not have been more generally noticed before. I promised to satisfy him upon these points, and an interview was fixed for this purpose the next day.

At the time appointed, I went with my books, papers, and African productions. Mr. Pitt examined the former himself. He turned over leaf after leaf, in which the copies of the muster-rolls were contained, with great patience; and when he had looked over above a hundred pages accurately, and found the name of every seaman inserted, his former abode or service, the time of his entry, and what had become of him, either by death, discharge, or desertion, he expressed his surprise at the great pains which had been taken in this branch of the inquiry; and confessed, with some emotion, that his doubts were wholly removed with respect to the destructive nature of this employ; and he said, moreover, that the facts contained in these documents, if they had been but fairly copied, could never be disproved. He was equally astonished at the various woods and other productions of Africa, but most of all at the manufactures of the natives in cotton, leather, gold, and iron, which were laid before him. These he handled and examined over and over again. Many sublime thoughts seemed to rush in upon him at once at the sight of these, some of which he expressed with observations becoming a great and a dignified mind. He thanked me for the light I had given him on many of the branches of this great question. And I went away under a certain conviction that I had left him much impressed in our favour.

My next visit was to Mr. (afterwards Lord) Grenville. I called upon him at the request of Mr. Wilberforce, who had previously written to him from Bath, as he had promised to attend the meetings of the privy council during the examinations which

were to take place. I found, in the course of our conversation, that Mr. Grenville had not then more knowledge of the subject than Mr. Pitt; but I found him differently circumstanced in other respects, for I perceived in him a warm feeling in behalf of the injured Africans, and that he had no doubt of the possibility of all the barbarities which had been alleged against this traffic. I showed him all my papers and some of my natural productions, which he examined. I was with him the next day, and once again afterwards, so that the subject was considered in all its parts. The effect of this interview with him was of course different from that upon the minister. In the former case I had removed doubts, and given birth to an interest in favour of our cause. But I had here only increased an interest, which had already been excited. I had only enlarged the mass of feeling, or added zeal to zeal, or confirmed resolutions and reasonings. Disposed in this manner originally himself, and strengthened by the documents with which I had furnished him, Mr. Grenville contracted an enmity to the Slave Trade, which was never afterwards diminished*.

A report having gone abroad that the committee of privy council would only examine those who were interested in the continuance of the trade, I found it necessary to call upon Mr. Pitt again, and to inform him of it, when I received an assurance that every person whom I chose to send to the council in behalf of the committee should be heard. This gave rise to a conversation relative to those witnesses whom we had to produce on the side of the abolition. And here I was obliged to disclose our weakness in this respect. I owned with sorrow that, though I had obtained specimens and official documents in abundance to prove many important points, yet I had found it difficult to prevail upon persons to be publicly examined on this subject. The only persons we could then count upon, were Mr. Ramsay, Mr.

* I have not mentioned the difference between these two eminent persons, with a view of drawing any invidious comparisons, but because, as these statements are true, such persons as have a high opinion of the late Mr. Pitt's judgment, may see that this great man did not espouse the cause hastily, or merely as a matter of feeling, but upon the conviction of his own mind.

H. Gandy, Mr. Falconbridge, Mr. Newton, and the Dean of Middleham. There was one, however, who would be a host of himself, if we could but gain him. I then mentioned Mr. Norris. I told Mr. Pitt the nature* and value of the testimony which he had given me at Liverpool, and the great zeal he had discovered to serve the cause. I doubted, however, if he would come to London for this purpose, even if I wrote to him; for he was intimate with almost all the owners of slave-vessels in Liverpool, and, living among these, he would not like to incur their resentment by taking a prominent part against them. I therefore entreated Mr. Pitt to send him a summons of council to attend, hoping that Mr. Norris would then be pleased to come up, as he would be enabled to reply to his friends that his appearance had not been voluntary. Mr. Pitt, however, informed me, that a summons from a committee of privy council, sitting as a board, was not binding upon the subject; and therefore that I had no other means left, but of writing to him, and he desired me to do this by the first post.

This letter I accordingly wrote, and sent it to my friend William Rathbone, who was to deliver it in person, and to use his own influence at the same time; but I received for answer, that Mr. Norris was then in London. Upon this I tried to find him out, to entreat him to consent to an examination before the council. At length I found his address; but before I could see him, I was told by the Bishop of London that he had come up as a Liverpool delegate in support of the Slave Trade. Astonished at this information, I made the bishop acquainted with the case, and asked him how it became me to act; for I was fearful lest, by exposing Mr. Norris, I should violate the rights of hospitality on the one hand, and by not exposing him that I should not do my duty to the cause I had undertaken on the other. His advice was, that I should see him, and ask him to explain the reasons of his conduct. I called upon him for this purpose, but he was out. He sent me, however, a letter soon afterwards, which was full of flattery; and in which, after having paid high compliments to the general force of my arguments, and

* See his evidence, Chap. xvii.

the general justice and humanity of my sentiments on this great question, which had made a deep impression upon his mind, he had found occasion to differ from me, since we had last parted, on particular points, and that he had therefore less reluctantly yielded to the call of becoming a delegate,—though notwithstanding he would gladly have declined the office if he could have done it with propriety.

At length the council began their examinations. Mr. Norris, Lieutenant Matthews, of the navy, who had just left a slave employ in Africa, and Mr. James Penny, formerly a slave captain, and then interested as a merchant in the trade, (which three were the delegates from Liverpool,) took possession of the ground first. Mr. Miles, Mr. Weuves, and others, followed them on the same side. The evidence which they gave, as previously concerted between themselves, may be shortly represented thus:—They denied that kidnapping either did or could take place in Africa, or that wars were made there for the purpose of procuring slaves. Having done away these wicked practices from their system, they maintained positions which were less exceptionable, as that the natives of Africa generally became slaves in consequence of having been made prisoners in just wars, or in consequence of their various crimes. They then gave a melancholy picture of the despotism and barbarity of some of the African princes, among whom the custom of sacrificing their own subjects prevailed. But, of all others, that which was afforded by Mr. Norris on this ground was the most frightful. The King of Dahomey, he said, sported with the lives of his people in the most wanton manner. He had seen at the gates of his palace two piles of heads, like those of shot in an arsenal. Within the palace, the heads of persons, newly put to death, were strewed at the distance of a few yards in the passage, which led to his apartment. This custom of human sacrifice by the King of Dahomey was not on one occasion only, but on many; such as on the reception of messengers from neighbouring states, or of white merchants, or on days of ceremonial. But the great carnage was once a year, when the poll-tax was paid by his subjects. A thousand persons, at least, were sacrificed annually on these different

occasions. The great men, too, of the country cut off a few heads on festival-days. From all these particulars the humanity of the Slave Trade was inferred, because it took away the inhabitants of Africa into lands where no such barbarities were known. But the humanity of it was insisted upon by positive circumstances also; namely, that a great number of the slaves were prisoners of war, and that in former times all such were put to death, whereas now they were saved: so that there was a great accession of happiness to Africa since the introduction of the trade.

These statements, and those of others on the same side of the question, had a great effect, as may easily be conceived, upon the feelings of those of the council who were present. Some of them began immediately to be prejudiced against us. There were others who even thought that it was almost unnecessary to proceed in the inquiry, for that the trade was actually a blessing. They had little doubt that all our assertions concerning it would be found false. The Bishop of London himself was so impressed by these unexpected accounts, that he asked me if Falconbridge, whose pamphlet had been previously sent by the committee to every member of the council, was worthy of belief, and if he would substantiate publicly what he had thus written: but these impressions unfortunately were not confined to those who had been present at the examinations. These could not help communicating them to others. Hence, in all the higher circles (some of which I sometimes used to frequent) I had the mortification to hear of nothing but the Liverpool evidence, and of our own credulity, and of the impositions which had been practised upon us: of these reports the planters and merchants did not fail to avail themselves. They boasted that they would soon do away all the idle tales which had been invented against them. They desired the public only to suspend their judgment till the privy council report should be out, when they would see the folly and wickedness of all our allegations. A little more evidence, and all would be over. On the 22nd of March, though the committee council had not then held its sittings more than a month, and these only twice or thrice a week, the following paragraph was seen in a morning paper:—"The report of the committee of

privy council will be ready in a few days. After due examination it appears that the major part of the complaints against this trade are ill-founded. Some regulations, however, are expected to take place, which may serve in a certain degree to appease the cause of humanity."

But while they, who were interested, had produced this outcry against us, in consequence of what had fallen from their own witnesses in the course of their examinations, they had increased it considerably by the industrious circulation of a most artful pamphlet among persons of rank and fortune at the west end of the metropolis, which was called, *Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave Trade.* This they had procured to be written by R. Harris, who was then clerk in a slave-house in Liverpool, but had been formerly a clergyman and a Jesuit. As they had maintained in the first instance, as has been already shown, the humanity of the traffic, so, by means of this pamphlet they asserted its consistency with revealed religion. That such a book should have made converts in such an age is surprising; and yet many, who ought to have known better, were carried away by it; and we had now absolutely to contend, and almost degrade ourselves by doing so, against the double argument of the humanity and the holiness of the trade.

By these means, but particularly by the former, the current of opinion in particular circles ran against us for the first month, and so strong, that it was impossible for us to stem it at once; but as some of the council recovered from their panic, and their good sense became less biassed by their feelings, and they were in a state to hear reason, their prejudices began to subside. It began now to be understood among them, that almost all the witnesses were concerned in the continuance of the trade. It began to be known also, (for Mr. Pitt and the Bishop of London took care that it should be circulated,) that Mr. Norris had but a short time before furnished me at Liverpool with information, all of which he had concealed* from the council, but all of which

* This was also the case with another witness, Mr. Weuves. He had given me accounts, before any stir was made about the Slave Trade, relative to it, all of which he kept back when he was examined there.

made for the abolition of it. Mr. Devaynes also, a respectable member of parliament, who had been in Africa, and who had been appealed to by Mr. Norris, when examined before the privy council, in behalf of his extraordinary facts, was unable, when summoned, to confirm them to the desired extent. From this evidence the council collected, that human sacrifices were not made on the arrival of White traders, as had been asserted; that there was no poll-tax in Dahomey at all; and that Mr. Norris must have been mistaken on these points, for he must have been there at the time of the ceremony of watering the graves, when about sixty persons suffered. This latter custom moreover appeared to have been a religious superstition of the country, such as at Otaheite, or in Britain in the time of the Druids, and to have had nothing to do with the Slave Trade*. With respect to prisoners of war, Mr. Devaynes allowed that the old, the lame, and the wounded, were often put to death on the spot; but this was to save the trouble of bringing them away. The young and the healthy were driven off for sale; but if they were not sold when offered, they were not killed, but reserved for another market, or became house-slaves to the conquerors. Mr. Devaynes also maintained, contrary to the allegations of the others, that a great number of persons were kidnapped in order to be sold to the ships; and that the government, where this happened, was not strong enough to prevent it. But besides these drawbacks from the weight of the testimony which had been given, it began to be perceived by some of the lords of the council, that the cruel superstitions which had been described, obtained only in one or two countries in Africa, and these of insignificant extent; whereas at the time, when their minds were carried away, as it were by their feelings, they had supposed them to attach to the whole of that vast continent. They perceived also, that there were circumstances related in the evidence by the delegates themselves, by means of which, if they were true, the inhumanity of the trade might be established, and this to their own disgrace. They

* Being a religious custom, it would still have gone on, though the Slave Trade had been abolished: nor could the merchants at any time have bought off a single victim.

had all confessed that such slaves, as the White traders refused to buy, were put to death; and yet that these traders, knowing that this would be the case, had the barbarity uniformly to reject those whom it did not suit them to purchase. Mr. Matthews had rejected one of this description himself, whom he saw afterwards destroyed. Mr. Penny had known the refuse thrown down Melimba rock. Mr. Norris himself, when certain prisoners of war were offered to him for sale, declined buying them because they appeared unhealthy; and though the king then told him that he would put them to death, he could not be prevailed upon to take them, but left them to their hard fate; and he had the boldness to state afterwards, that it was his belief that many of them actually suffered.

These considerations had the effect of diminishing the prejudices of some of the council on this great question: and when this was perceived to be the case, it was the opinion of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Grenville, and the Bishop of London, that we should send three or four of our own evidences for examination, who might help to restore matters to an equilibrium. Accordingly, Mr. Falconbridge, and some others, all of whom were to speak to the African part of the subject, were introduced. These produced a certain weight in the opposite scale. But soon after these had been examined, Dr. Andrew Spaarman, professor of physic, and inspector of the museum of the royal academy at Stockholm, and his companion, C. B. Wadstrom, chief director of the assay-office there, arrived in England. These gentlemen had been lately sent to Africa by the late king of Sweden, to make discoveries in botany, mineralogy, and other departments of science. For this purpose the Swedish ambassador at Paris had procured them permission from the French government to visit the countries bordering on the Senegal, and had insured them protection there. They had been conveyed to the place of their destination, where they had remained from August 1787, to the end of January 1788; but meeting with obstacles which they had not foreseen, they had left it, and had returned to Havre de Grace, from whence they had just arrived in London, on their way home. It so happened, that by means of George Harrison, one of our

committee, I fell in unexpectedly with these gentlemen. I had not long been with them, before I perceived the great treasure I had found. They gave me many beautiful specimens of African produce. They showed me their journals, which they had regularly kept from day to day. In these I had the pleasure of seeing a number of circumstances minuted down, all relating to the Slave Trade, and even drawings on the same subject. I obtained a more accurate and satisfactory knowledge of the manners and customs of the Africans from these, than from all the persons put together whom I had yet seen. I was anxious, therefore, to take them before the committee of council, to which they were pleased to consent; and as Dr. Spaarman was to leave London in a few days, I procured him an introduction first. His evidence went to show, that the natives of Africa lived in a fruitful and luxuriant country, which supplied all their wants, and that they would be a happy people, if it were not for the existence of the Slave Trade. He instanced wars which he knew to have been made by the Moors upon the Negroes, (for they were entered upon wholly at the instigation of the White traders,) for the purpose of getting slaves, and he had the pain of seeing the unhappy captives brought in on such occasions, and some of them in a wounded state. Among them, were many women and children, and the women were in great affliction. He saw also the king of Barbesin send out his parties on expeditions of a a similar kind, and he saw them return with slaves. The king had been made intoxicated on purpose, by the French agents, or he would never have consented to the measure. He stated also, that in consequence of the temptations held out by slave-vessels coming upon the coast, the natives seized one another in the night, when they found opportunity; and even invited others to their houses, whom they treacherously detained, and sold at these times; so that every enormity was practised in Africa, in consequence of the existence of the trade. These specific instances made a proper impression upon the lords of the council in their turn: for Dr. Spaarman was a man of high character; he possessed the confidence of his sovereign; he had no interest whatever in giving his evidence on this subject, either on one or

the other side; his means of information too had been large; he had also recorded the facts which had come before him, and he had his journal, written in the French language, to produce. The tide, therefore, which had run so strongly against us, began now to turn a little in our favour.

While these examinations were going on, petitions continued to be sent to the House of Commons, from various parts of the kingdom. No less than one hundred and three were presented in this session. The city of London, though she was drawn the other way by the cries of commercial interest, made a sacrifice to humanity and justice: the two universities applauded her conduct by their own example. Large manufacturing towns, and whole counties, expressed their sentiments and wishes in a similar manner. The Established Church in separate dioceses, and the Quakers and other dissenters, as separate religious bodies, joined in one voice upon this occasion.

The committee, in the interim, were not unmindful of the great work they had undertaken, and they continued to forward it in its different departments. They kept up a communication by letter with most of the worthy persons, who have been mentioned to have written to them, but particularly with Brissot and Claviere; from whom they had the satisfaction of learning, that a society had at length been established at Paris, for the abolition of the Slave Trade in France. The learned Marquis de Condorcet had become the president of it. The virtuous Duc de la Rochefoucauld and the Marquis de la Fayette had sanctioned it by enrolling their names as the two first members. Petion, who was placed afterwards among the mayors of Paris, followed. Women also were not thought unworthy of being honorary and assistant members of this humane institution; and among these were found the amiable Marchioness of la Fayette, Madame de Poivre, widow of the late intendant of the Isle of France, and Madame Necker, wife of the first minister of state.

The new correspondents, who voluntarily offered their services to the committee, during the first part of the period now under consideration, were S. Whitcomb, Esq., of Gloucester; the Rev. D. Watson, of Middleton Tyas, Yorkshire; John Murlin, Esq.,

of High Wycomb; Charles Collins, Esq., of Swansea; Henry Tudor, Esq., of Sheffield; the Rev. John Hare, of Lincoln; Samuel Tooker, Esq., of Moorgate, near Rotherham; the Rev. G. Walker, and Francis Wakefield, Esq., of Nottingham; the Rev. Mr. Hepworth, of Burton-upon-Trent; the Rev. H. Dannett, of St. John's, Liverpool; the Rev. Dr. Oglander, of New College, Oxford; the Rev. H. Coulthurst, of Sidney College, Cambridge; R. Selfe, Esq., of Cirencester; Morris Birkbeck, of Hanford, Dorsetshire; William Jepson, of Lancaster; B. Kaye, of Leeds: John Patison, Esq., of Paisley; J. E. Dolben, Esq., of Northamptonshire; the Rev. Mr. Smith, of Wendover; John Wilkinson, Esq., of Woodford; Samuel Milford, Esq., of Exeter; Peter Lunel, Esq., treasurer of the committee at Bristol; James Pemberton, of Philadelphia; and the president of the Society at New York.

The letters from new correspondents during the latter part of this period, were the following:—

One from Alexander Alison, Esq., of Edinburgh, in which he expressed it to be his duty to attempt to awaken the inhabitants of Scotland to a knowledge of the monstrous evil of the Slave Trade, and to form a committee there, to act in union with that of London, in carrying the great object of their institution into effect.

Another from Elhanan Winchester, offering the committee one hundred of his sermons, which he had preached against the Slave Trade, in Fairfax county, in Virginia, so early as in the year 1774.

Another from Dr. Frossard, of Lyons, in which he offered his services for the South of France, and desired different publications to be sent him, that he might be better qualified to take a part in the promotion of the cause.

Another from Professor Bruns, of Helmstadt, in Germany, in which he desired to know the particulars relative to the institution of the committee, as many thousands upon the continent were then beginning to feel for the sufferings of the oppressed African race.

Another from the Rev. James Manning, of Exeter, in which

he stated himself to be authorized by the dissenting ministers of Devon and Cornwall, to express their high approbation of the conduct of the committee, and to offer their services in the promotion of this great work of humanity and religion.

Another from William Senhouse, Esq., of the island of Barbados. In this he gave the particulars of two estates, one of them his own, and the other belonging to a nobleman, upon each of which the slaves, in consequence of humane treatment, had increased by natural population only. Another effect of this humane treatment had been, that these slaves were among the most orderly and tractable in that island. From these and other instances he argued, that if the planters would, all of them, take proper care of their slaves, their humanity would be repaid in a few years, by a valuable increase in their property, and they would never want supplies from a traffic, which had been so justly condemned.

Two others, the one from Travers Hartley, and the other from Alexander Jaffray, Esqrs., both of Dublin, were read. These gentlemen sent certain resolutions, which had been agreed upon by the chamber of commerce and by the guild of merchants there, relative to the abolition of the Slave Trade. They rejoiced, in the name of those whom they represented, that Ireland had been unspotted by a traffic, which they held in such deep abhorrence; and promised, if it should be abolished in England, to take the most active measures to prevent it from finding an asylum in the ports of that kingdom.

The letters of William Senhouse, and of Travers Hartley, and of Alexander Jaffray, Esqrs., were ordered to be presented to the committee of privy council, and copies of them to be left there.

The business of the committee having almost daily increased within this period, Dr. Baker and Bennet Langton, Esq., who were the two first to assist me in my early labours, and who have been mentioned among the forerunners and coadjutors of the cause, were elected members of it. Dr. Kippis also was added to the list.

The honorary and corresponding members elected within the

same period, were the Dean of Middleham; T. W. Coke, Esq., member of parliament, of Holkham, in Norfolk; and the Rev. William Leigh, who has been before mentioned, of Little Plumstead, in the same county. The latter had published several valuable letters in the public papers, under the signature of Africanus: these had excited great notice, and done much good. The worthy author had now collected them into a publication, and had offered the profits of it to the committee. Hence this mark of their respect was conferred upon him.

The committee ordered a new edition of three thousand of the Dean of Middleham's Letters to be printed. Having approved of a manuscript, written by James Field Stanfield, a mariner, containing observations upon a voyage which he had lately made to the coast of Africa for slaves, they ordered three thousand of these to be printed also. By this time, the subject having been much talked of, and many doubts and difficulties having been thrown in the way of the abolition, by persons interested in the continuance of the trade, Mr. Ramsay, who has been often so honourably mentioned, put down upon paper all the objections which were then handed about, and also those answers to each, which he was qualified, from his superior knowledge of the subject, to suggest. This he did, that the members of the legislature might see the more intricate parts of the question unravelled, and that they might not be imposed upon by the spurious arguments which were then in circulation concerning it. Observing also the poisonous effect which *The Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave Trade* had produced upon the minds of many, he wrote an answer on scriptural grounds to that pamphlet. These works were sent to the press, and three thousand copies of each of them were ordered to be struck off.

The committee, in their arrangement of the distribution of their books, ordered NEWTON'S *Thoughts*, and RAMSAY'S *Objections and Answers*, to be sent to each member of both houses of parliament.

They appointed also three sub-committees for different purposes: one to draw up such facts and arguments respecting the Slave Trade, with a view of being translated into other languages,

as should give foreigners a suitable knowledge of the subject; another to prepare an answer to certain false reports which had been spread relative to the object of their institution, and to procure an insertion of it in the daily papers; and a third to draw up rules for the government of the society.

By the latter end of the month of March, there was an anxious expectation in the public, notwithstanding the privy council had taken up the subject, that some notice should be taken, in the lower house of parliament, of the numerous petitions which had been presented there. There was the same expectation in many of the members of it themselves. Lord Penrhyn, one of the representatives for Liverpool, and a planter also, had anticipated this notice, by moving for such papers relative to ships employed, goods exported, produce imported, and duties upon the same, as would show the vast value of the trade, which it was in contemplation to abolish. But at this time Mr. Wilberforce was ill, and unable to gratify the expectations which had been thus apparent. The committee, therefore, who partook of the anxiety of the public, knew not what to do. They saw that two-thirds of the session had already passed. They saw no hope of Mr. Wilberforce's recovery for some time. Rumours too were afloat, that other members, of whose plans they knew nothing, and who might even make emancipation their object, would introduce the business into the house. Thus situated, they waited, as patiently as they could, till the 8th of April*, when they resolved to write to Mr. Wilberforce, to explain to him their fears and wishes, and to submit it to his consideration, whether, if he were unable himself, he would appoint some one in whom he could confide, to make some motion in parliament on the subject.

But the public expectation became now daily more visible. The inhabitants of Manchester, many of whom had signed the petition for that place, became impatient, and they appointed Thomas Walker and Thomas Cooper, Esquires, as their delegates, to proceed to London to communicate with the committee on this subject, to assist them in their deliberations upon it, and to

* Brissot attended in person at this committee in his way to America, which it was then an object with him to visit.

give their attendance while it was under discussion by the legislature.

At the time of the arrival of the delegates, who were received as such by the committee, a letter came from Bath, in which it was stated that Mr. Wilberforce's health was in such a precarious state, that his physicians dared not allow him to read any letter which related to the subject of the Slave Trade.

The committee were now again at a loss how to act, when they were relieved from this doubtful situation by a message from Mr. Pitt, who desired a conference with their chairman. Mr. Sharp accordingly went, and on his return made the following report: "He had a full opportunity," he said, "of explaining to Mr. Pitt that the desire of the committee went to the entire abolition of the Slave Trade. Mr. Pitt assured him that his heart was with the committee as to this object, and that he considered himself pledged to Mr. Wilberforce, that the cause should not sustain any injury from his indisposition; but at the same time observed, that the subject was of great political importance, and it was requisite to proceed in it with temper and prudence. He did not apprehend, as the examinations before the privy council would yet take up some time, that the subject could be fully investigated in the present session of parliament; but said he would consider whether the forms of the house would admit of any measures that would be obligatory on them to take it up early in the ensuing session."

In about a week after this conference, Mr. Morton Pitt was deputed by the minister to write to the committee, to say that he had found precedents for such a motion as he conceived to be proper, and that he would submit it to the House of Commons in a few days.

At the next meeting, which was on the 6th of May, and at which Major Cartwright and the Manchester delegates assisted, Mr. Morton Pitt attended as a member of the committee, and said that the minister had fixed his motion for the 9th. It was then resolved, that deputations should be sent to some of the leading members of parliament, to request their support of the approaching motion. I was included in one of these, and in that

which was to wait upon Mr. Fox. We were received by him in a friendly manner. On putting the question to him, which related to the object of our mission, Mr. Fox paused for a little while, as if in the act of deliberation; when he assured us unequivocally, and in language which could not be misunderstood, that he would support the object of the committee to its fullest extent, being convinced that there was no remedy for the evil, but in the total abolition of the trade.

At length, the 9th, or the day fixed upon, arrived, when this important subject was to be mentioned in the House of Commons for the first time*, with a view to the public discussion of it. It is impossible for me to give, within the narrow limits of this work, all that was then said upon it; and yet as the debate which ensued was the first which took place upon it, I should feel inexcusable if I were not to take some notice of it.

Mr. Pitt rose. He said he intended to move a resolution relative to a subject which was of more importance than any which had ever been agitated in that house. This honour he should not have had, but for a circumstance which he could not but deeply regret, the severe indisposition of his friend Mr. Wilberforce, in whose hands every measure which belonged to justice, humanity, and the national interest, was peculiarly well placed. The subject in question was no less than that of the Slave Trade. It was obvious from the great number of petitions which had been presented concerning it, how much it had engaged the public attention, and consequently how much it deserved the serious notice of that house, and how much it became their duty to take some measure concerning it. But whatever was done on such a subject, every one would agree; ought to be done with the maturest deliberation. Two opinions had prevailed without doors, as appeared from the language of the different petitions. It had been pretty generally thought that the African Slave Trade ought to be abolished. There were others, however, who

* David Hartley made a motion some years before in the same house, as has been shown in a former part of this work; but this was only to establish a proposition, That the Slave Trade was contrary to the Laws of God and the Rights of Man.

thought that it only stood in need of regulations. But all had agreed that it ought not to remain as it stood at present. But that measure which it might be the most proper to take, could only be discovered by a cool, patient, and diligent examination of the subject in all its circumstances, relations, and consequences. This had induced him to form an opinion that the present was not the proper time for discussing it; for the session was now far advanced, and there was also a want of proper materials for the full information of the house. It would, he thought, be better discussed, when it might produce some useful debate, and when that inquiry which had been instituted by His Majesty's Ministers, (he meant the examination by a committee of privy council,) should be brought to such a state of maturity as to make it fit that the result of it should be laid before the house. That inquiry, he trusted, would facilitate their investigation, and enable them the better to proceed to a decision which should be equally founded on principles of humanity, justice, and sound policy. As there was not a probability of reaching so desirable an end in the present state of the business, he meant to move a resolution to pledge the house to the discussion of the question early in the next session. If by that time his honourable friend should be recovered, which he hoped would be the case, then he (Mr. Wilberforce) would take the lead in it; but should it unfortunately happen otherwise, then he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) pledged himself to bring forward some proposition concerning it. The house, however, would observe, that he had studiously avoided giving any opinion of his own on this great subject. He thought it wiser to defer this till the time of the discussion should arrive. He concluded with moving, after having read the names of the places from whence the different petitions had come, "That this house will, early in the next session of parliament, proceed to take into consideration the circumstances of the Slave Trade complained of in the said petitions, and what may be fit to be done thereupon."

Mr. Fox began by observing, that he had long taken an interest in this great subject, which he had also minutely examined, and that it was his intention to have brought something forward

himself in parliament respecting it; but when he heard that Mr. Wilberforce had resolved to take it up, he was unaffectedly rejoiced, not only knowing the purity of his principles and character, but because, from a variety of considerations as to the situations in which different men stood in the house, there was something that made him honestly think it was better that the business should be in the hands of that gentleman than in his own. Having premised this, he said that, as so many petitions, and these signed by such numbers of persons of the most respectable character, had been presented, he was sorry that it had been found impossible that the subject of them could be taken up this year, and more particularly as he was not able to see, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had done, that there were circumstances, which might happen by the next year, which would make it more advisable and advantageous to take it up then, than it would have been to enter upon it in the present session. For certainly there could be no information laid before the house, through the medium of the lords of the council, which could not more advantageously have been obtained by themselves, had they instituted a similar inquiry. It was their duty to advise the king, and not to ask his advice. This the constitution had laid down as one of its most essential principles; and though in the present instance he saw no cause for blame, because he was persuaded His Majesty's Ministers had not acted with any ill intention, it was still a principle never to be departed from, because it never could be departed from without establishing a precedent which might lead to very serious abuses. He lamented that the privy council, who had received no petitions from the people on the subject, should have instituted an inquiry, and that the House of Commons, the table of which had been loaded with petitions from various parts of the kingdom, should not have instituted any inquiry at all. He hoped these petitions would have a fair discussion in that house, independently of any information that could be given to it by His Majesty's Ministers. He urged again the superior advantages of an inquiry into such a subject carried on within those walls over any inquiry carried on by the lords of the council. In inquiries carried on in that house, they had the benefit of every circumstance of publi-

city; which was a most material benefit indeed, and that which of all others made the manner of conducting the parliamentary proceedings of Great Britain the envy and the admiration of the world. An inquiry there was better than an inquiry in any other place, however respectable the persons before and by whom it was carried on. There, all that could be said for the abolition or against it might be said. In that house every relative fact would have been produced, no information would have been withheld, no circumstance would have been omitted, which was necessary for elucidation; nothing would have been kept back. He was sorry, therefore, that the consideration of the question, but more particularly where so much human suffering was concerned, should be put off to another session, when it was obvious that no advantage could be gained by the delay.

He then adverted to the secrecy which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had observed relative to his own opinion on this important subject. Why did he refuse to give it? Had Mr. Wilberforce been present, the house would have had a great advantage in this respect, because doubtless he would have stated in what view he saw the subject, and in a general way described the nature of the project he meant to propose. But now they were kept in the dark as to the nature of any plan, till the next session. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had indeed said, that it had been a very general opinion that the African Slave Trade should be abolished. He had said again, that others had not gone so far, but had given it as their opinion, that it required to be revised and regulated. But why did he not give his own sentiments boldly to the world on this great question? As for himself, he (Mr. Fox) had no scruple to declare at the outset, that the Slave Trade ought not to be regulated, but destroyed. To this opinion his mind was made up; and he was persuaded that, the more the subject was considered, the more his opinion would gain ground; and it would be admitted, that to consider it in any other manner, or on any other principles than those of humanity and justice, would be idle and absurd. If there were any such men, and he did not know but that there were those, who, led away by local and interested considerations, thought the

Slave Trade might still continue under certain modifications, these were the dupes of error, and mistook what they thought their interest, for what he would undertake to convince them was their loss. Let such men only hear the case further, and they would find the result to be, that a cold-hearted policy was folly when it opposed the great principles of humanity and justice.

He concluded by saying that he would not oppose the resolution, if other members thought it best to postpone the consideration of the subject; but he should have been better pleased if it had been discussed sooner; and he certainly reserved to himself the right of voting for any question upon it that should be brought forward by any other member in the course of the present session.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that nothing he had heard had satisfied him of the propriety of departing from the rule he had laid down for himself, of not offering, but of studiously avoiding to offer, any opinion upon the subject till the time should arrive when it could be fully argued. He thought that no discussion which could take place that session, could lead to any useful measure, and therefore, he had wished not to argue it till the whole of it could be argued. A day would come, when every member would have an opportunity of stating his opinion; and he wished it might be discussed with a proper spirit on all sides, on fair and liberal principles, and without any shackles from local and interested considerations.

With regard to the inquiries instituted before the committee of privy council, he was sure, as soon as it became obvious that the subject must undergo a discussion, it was the duty of His Majesty's Ministers to set those inquiries on foot, which should best enable them to judge in what manner they could meet or offer any proposition respecting the Slave Trade. And although such previous examinations by no means went to deprive that house of its undoubted right to institute those inquiries, or to preclude them, they would be found greatly to facilitate them. But, exclusive of this consideration, it would have been utterly impossible to have come to any discussion of the subject, that could have been brought to a conclusion in the course of the present session. Did the inquiry then before the privy council

prove a loss of time? So far from it, that, upon the whole, time had been gained by it. He had moved the resolution, therefore, to pledge the house to bring on the discussion early in the next session, when they would have a full opportunity of considering every part of the subject: first, whether the whole of the trade ought to be abolished; and, if so, how and when. If it should be thought that the trade should only be put under certain regulations, what those regulations ought to be, and when they should take place. These were questions which must be considered; and therefore he had made his resolution as wide as possible, that there might be room for all necessary considerations to be taken in. He repeated his declaration, that he would reserve his sentiments till the day of discussion should arrive; and again declared, that he earnestly wished to avoid an anticipation of the debate upon the subject. But if such debate was likely to take place, he would withdraw his motion, and offer it another day.

A few words then passed between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox in reply to each other; after which Lord Penrhyn rose. He said there were two classes of men, the African merchants, and the planters, both of whose characters had been grossly calumniated. These wished that an inquiry might be instituted, and this immediately, conscious that the more their conduct was examined the less they would be found to merit the opprobrium with which they had been loaded. The charges against the Slave Trade were either true or false. If they were true, it ought to be abolished; but if upon inquiry they were found to be without foundation, justice ought to be done to the reputation of those who were concerned in it. He then said a few words, by which he signified, that, after all, it might not be an improper measure to make regulations in the trade.

Mr. Burke said, the noble lord, who was a man of honour himself, had reasoned from his own conduct, and, being conscious of his own integrity, was naturally led to imagine that other men were equally just and honourable. Undoubtedly the merchants and planters had a right to call for an investigation of their conduct, and their doing so did them great credit. The Slave Trade also ought equally to be inquired into. Neither did he

deny that it was right his Majesty's ministers should inquire into its merits for themselves. They had done their duty; but that House, who had the petitions of the people on their table, had neglected it, by having so long deferred an inquiry of their own. If that House wished to preserve their functions, their understandings, their honour, and their dignity, he advised them to beware of committees of privy council. If they suffered their business to be done by such means, they were abdicating their trust and character, and making way for an entire abolition of their functions, which they were parting with one after another. Thus:—

Star after star goes out, and all is night.

If they neglected the petitions of their constituents, they must fall, and the privy council be instituted in their stead. What would be the consequence? His Majesty's Ministers, instead of consulting them, and giving them the opportunity of exercising their functions of deliberation and legislation, would modify the measures of government elsewhere, and bring down the edicts of the privy council to them to register. Mr. Burke said, he was one of those who wished for the abolition of the Slave Trade. He thought it ought to be abolished, on principles of humanity and justice. If, however, opposition of interests should render its total abolition impossible, it ought to be regulated, and that immediately. They need not send to the West Indies to know the opinions of the planters on the subject. They were to consider first of all, and abstractedly from all political, personal, and local considerations, that the Slave Trade was directly contrary to the principles of humanity and justice, and to the spirit of the British constitution; and that the state of slavery, which followed it, however mitigated, was a state so improper, so degrading, and so ruinous to the feelings and capacities of human nature, that it ought not to be suffered to exist. He deprecated delay in this business, as well for the sake of planters as of the slaves.

Mr. Gascoyne, the other member for Liverpool, said he had no objection that the discussion should stand over to the next session of parliament, provided it could not come on in the present, because he was persuaded it would ultimately be found

that his constituents, who were more immediately concerned in the trade, and who had been so shamefully calumniated, were men of respectable character. He hoped the privy council would print their Report when they had brought their inquiries to a conclusion, and that they would lay it before the House and the public, in order to enable all concerned to form a judgment of what was proper to be done relative to the subject next session. With respect, however, to the total abolition of the Slave Trade, he must confess that such a measure was both unnecessary, visionary, and impracticable; but he wished some alterations or modifications to be adopted. He hoped that, when the House came to go into the general question, they would not forget the trade, commerce, and navigation of the country.

Mr. Rolle said, he had received instruction from his constituents to inquire if the grievances, which had been alleged to result from the Slave Trade, were well founded; and, if it should appear that they were, to assist in applying a remedy. He was glad the discussion had been put off till next session, as it would give all of them an opportunity of considering the subject with more mature deliberation.

Mr. Martin desired to say a few words only. He put the case, that, supposing the slaves were treated ever so humanely, when they were carried to the West Indies, what compensation could be made them for being torn from their nearest relations, and from everything that was dear to them in life? He hoped no political advantage, no national expediency, would be allowed to weigh in the scale against the eternal rules of moral rectitude. As for himself, he had no hesitation to declare, in this early stage of the business, that he should think himself a wicked wretch if he did not do everything in his power to put a stop to the Slave Trade.

Sir William Dolben said, that he did not then wish to enter into the discussion of the general question of the abolition of the Slave Trade, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer was so desirous of postponing; but he wished to say a few words on what he conceived to be a most crying evil, and which might be immediately remedied, without infringing upon the limits of that

question. He did not allude to the sufferings of the poor Africans in their own country, nor afterwards in the West India islands, but to that intermediate state of tenfold misery which they underwent in their transportation. When put on board the ships, the poor unhappy wretches were chained to each other, hand and foot, and stowed so close, that they were not allowed above a foot and a half for each individual in breadth. Thus crammed together like herrings in a barrel, they contracted putrid and fatal disorders; so that they who came to inspect them in a morning had occasionally to pick dead slaves out of their rows, and to unchain their carcasses from the bodies of their wretched fellow-sufferers, to whom they had been fastened. Nor was it merely to the slaves that the baneful effects of the contagion thus created were confined. This contagion affected the ships' crews, and numbers of the seamen employed in the horrid traffic perished. This evil, he said, called aloud for a remedy, and that remedy ought to be applied soon; otherwise no less than ten thousand lives might be lost between this and next session. He wished therefore this grievance to be taken into consideration, independently of the general question; and that some regulations, such as restraining the captains from taking above a certain number of slaves on board, according to the size of their vessels, and obliging them to let in fresh air, and provide better accommodation for the slaves during their passage, should be adopted.

Mr. Young wished the consideration of the whole subject to stand over to the next session.

Sir James Johnstone, though a planter, professed himself a friend to the abolition of the Slave Trade. He said it was highly necessary that the House should do something respecting it; but whatever was to be done should be done soon, as delay might be productive of bad consequences in the islands.

Mr. L. Smith stood up a zealous advocate for the abolition of the Slave Trade. He said that even Lord Penrhyn and Mr. Gascoyne, the members for Liverpool, had admitted the evil of it to a certain extent; for regulations or modifications, in which they seemed to acquiesce, were unnecessary where abuses did not really exist.

Mr. Grigby thought it his duty to declare, that no privy council report, or other mode of examination, could influence him. A traffic in the persons of men was so odious, that it ought everywhere, as soon as ever it was discovered, to be abolished.

Mr. Bastard was anxious that the House should proceed to the discussion of the subject in the present session. The whole country, he said, had petitioned; and was it any satisfaction to the country to be told, that the committee of privy council were inquiring? Who knew anything of what was doing by the committee of privy council, or what progress they were making? The inquiry ought to have been instituted in that House, and in the face of the public, that everybody concerned might know what was going on. The numerous petitions of the people ought immediately to be attended to. He reprobated delay on this occasion; and as the honourable baronet, Sir William Dolben, had stated facts which were shocking to humanity, he hoped he would move that a committee might be appointed to inquire into their existence, that a remedy might be applied, if possible, before the sailing of the next ships for Africa.

Mr. Whitbread professed himself a strenuous advocate for the total and immediate abolition of the Slave Trade. It was contrary to nature, and to every principle of justice, humanity, and religion.

Mr. Pelham stated, that he had very maturely considered the subject of the Slave Trade; and had he not known that the business was in the hands of an honourable member, (whose absence from the house, and the cause of it, no man lamented more sincerely than he did,) he should have ventured to propose something concerning it himself. If it should be thought that the trade ought not to be entirely done away, the sooner it was regulated the better. He had a plan for this purpose, which appeared to him to be likely to produce some salutary effects. He wished to know if any such thing would be permitted to be proposed in the course of the present session.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said he should be happy, if he thought the circumstances of the house were such as to enable

them to proceed to an immediate discussion of the question; but as that did not appear, from the reasons he had before stated, to be the case, he could only assure the honourable gentleman, that the same motives which had induced him to propose an inquiry into the subject early in the next session of parliament, would make him desirous of receiving any other light which could be thrown upon it.

The question having been then put, the resolution was agreed to unanimously. Thus ended the first debate that ever took place in the Commons, on this important subject. This debate, though many of the persons concerned in it abstained cautiously from entering into the merits of the general question, became interesting, in consequence of circumstances attending it. Several rose up at once to give relief, as it were, to their feelings by utterance; but by so doing they were prevented, many of them, from being heard. They who were heard, spoke with peculiar energy, as if warmed in an extraordinary manner by the subject. There was an apparent enthusiasm in behalf of the injured Africans. It was supposed by some, that there was a moment, in which, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had moved for an immediate abolition of the trade, he would have carried it that night; and both he and others, who professed an attachment to the cause, were censured for not having taken a due advantage of the disposition which was so apparent. But independently of the inconsistency of doing this on the part of the ministry, while the privy council were in the midst of their inquiries, and of the improbability that the other branches of the legislature would have concurred in so hasty a measure; what good would have accrued to the cause, if the abolition had been then carried? Those concerned in the cruel system would never have rested quietly under the stigma under which they then laboured. They would have urged, that they had been condemned unheard. The merchants would have said, that they had had no notice of such an event, that they might prepare a way for their vessels in other trades. The planters would have said, that they had had no time allowed them to provide such supplies from Africa as might enable them to keep up their respective stocks. They would, both of them, have called

aloud for immediate indemnification, They would have decried the policy of the measure of the abolition; and where had it been proved? They would have demanded a reverse of it; and might they not in cooler moments have succeeded? Whereas, by entering into a patient discussion of the merits of the question; by bringing evidence upon it; by reasoning upon that evidence night after night, and year after year, and thus by disputing the ground inch as it were by inch, the abolition of the Slave Trade stands upon a rock, upon which it never can be shaken. Many of those who were concerned in the cruel system have now given up their prejudices, because they became convinced in the contest. A stigma too has been fixed upon it, which can never be erased: and in a large record, in which the cruelty and injustice of it have been recognised in indelible characters, its impolicy also has been eternally enrolled.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Continuation to the middle of July.—Anxiety of Sir William Dolben to lessen the horrors of the Middle Passage till the great question should be discussed; brings in a bill for that purpose; debate upon it.—Evidence examined against it; its inconsistency and falsehoods.—Further debate upon it.—Bill passed, and carried to the Lords; vexatious delays and opposition there; carried backwards and forwards to both houses.—At length finally passed.—Proceedings of the committee in the interim; effects of them.

It was supposed, after the debate, of which the substance has been just given, that there would have been no further discussion of the subject till the next year: but Sir William Dolben became more and more affected by those considerations which he had offered to the house on the ninth of May. The trade, he found, was still to go on. The horrors of the transportation, or Middle Passage, as it was called, which he conceived to be the worst in the long catalogue of evils belonging to the system, would of course accompany it. The partial discussion of these, he believed, would be no infringement of the late resolution of the house. He was desirous, therefore, of doing something in the course of the present session, by which the miseries of the trade might be diminished as much as possible, while it lasted, or till the legislature could take up the whole of the question. This desire he mentioned to several of his friends; and as these approved of his design, he made it known on the twenty-first of May in the House of Commons.

He began by observing, that he would take up but little of their time. He rose to move for leave to bring in a bill for the relief of those unhappy persons, the natives of Africa, from the hardships to which they were usually exposed in their passage from the coast of Africa to the colonies. He did not mean, by any regulations he might introduce for this purpose, to countenance or sanction the Slave Trade, which, however modified, would be always wicked and unjustifiable. Nor did he mean; by

introducing these, to go into the general question which the house had prohibited. The bill which he had in contemplation, went only to limit the number of persons to be put on board to the tonnage of the vessel which was to carry them, in order to prevent them from being crowded too closely together; to secure to them good and sufficient provisions; and to take cognizance of other matters, which related to their health and accommodation; and this only till parliament could enter into the general merits of the question. This humane interference he thought no member would object to. Indeed, those for Liverpool had both of them admitted, on the ninth of May, that regulations were desirable; and he had since conversed with them, and was happy to learn that they would not oppose him on this occasion.

Mr. Whitbread highly approved of the object of the worthy baronet, which was to diminish the sufferings of an unoffending people. Whatever could be done to relieve them in their hard situation, till parliament could take up the whole of their case, ought to be done by men living in a civilized country, and professing the Christian religion: he therefore begged leave to second the motion which had been made.

General Norton was sorry that he had not risen up sooner. He wished to have seconded this humane motion himself. It had his most cordial approbation.

Mr. Burgess complimented the worthy baronet on the honour he had done himself on this occasion, and congratulated the house on the good, which they were likely to do by acceding, as he was sure they would, to his proposition.

Mr. Joliffe rose, and said that the motion in question should have his strenuous support.

Mr. Gascoyne stated, that having understood from the honourable baronet that he meant only to remedy the evils, which were stated to exist in transporting the inhabitants of Africa to the West Indies, he had told them that he would not object to the introduction of such a bill. Should it however interfere with the general question, the discussion of which had been prohibited, he would then oppose it. He must also reserve another case for his opposition; and this would be, if the evils of which it took

cognizance should appear not to have been well founded. He had written to his constituents to be made acquainted with this circumstance, and he must be guided by them on the subject.

Mr. Martin was surprised how any person could give an opposition to such a bill. Whatever were the merits of the great question, all would allow, that if human beings were to be transported across the ocean, they should be carried over with as little suffering as possible to themselves.

Mr. Hamilton deprecated the subdivision of this great and important question, which the house had reserved for another session. Every endeavour to meddle with one part of it, before the whole of it could be taken into consideration, looked rather as if it came from an enemy than from a friend. He was fearful that such a bill as this would sanction a traffic, which should never be viewed but in a hostile light, or as repugnant to the feelings of our nature, and to the voice of our religion.

Lord Frederic Campbell was convinced that the postponing of all consideration of the subject till the next session was a wise measure. He was sure that neither the house nor the public were in a temper sufficiently cool to discuss it properly. There was a general warmth of feeling, or an enthusiasm about it, which ran away with the understandings of men, and disqualified them from judging soberly concerning it. He wished, therefore, that the present motion might be deferred.

Mr. William Smith said, that if the motion of the honourable Baronet had trespassed upon the great question reserved for consideration, he would have opposed it himself; but he conceived the subject which it comprehended might with propriety be separately considered; and if it were likely that a hundred, but much more a thousand, lives would be saved by this bill, it was the duty of that house to adopt it without delay.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, though he meant still to conceal his opinion as to the general merits of the question, could not be silent here. He was of opinion that he could very consistently give this motion his support. There was a possibility (and a bare possibility was a sufficient ground with him) that in consequence of the resolution lately come to by the house, and

the temper then manifested in it, those persons who were concerned in the Slave Trade might put the natives of Africa in a worse situation, during their transportation to the colonies, even than they were in before, by cramming additional numbers on board their vessels, in order to convey as many as possible to the West Indies before parliament ultimately decided on the subject. The possibility, therefore, that such a consequence might grow out of their late resolution during the intervening months between the end of the present and the commencement of the next session, was a good and sufficient parliamentary ground for them to provide immediate means to prevent the existence of such an evil. He considered this as an act of indispensable duty, and on that ground the bill should have his support.

Soon after this the question was put, and leave was given for the introduction of the bill.

An account of these proceedings of the house having been sent to the merchants of Liverpool, they held a meeting, and came to resolutions on the subject. They determined to oppose the bill in every stage in which it should be brought forward, and, what was extraordinary, even the principle of it. Accordingly, between the 21st of May and the 2nd of June, on which latter day the bill having been previously read a second time was to be committed, petitions from interested persons had been brought against it, and consent had been obtained, that both council and evidence should be heard.

The order of the day having been read on the 2nd of June for the house to resolve itself into a committee of the whole house, a discussion took place relative to the manner in which the business was to be conducted. This being over, the counsel began their observations; and, as soon as they had finished, evidence was called to the bar in behalf of the petitions which had been delivered.

From the 2nd of June to the 17th the house continued to hear the evidence at intervals, but the members for Liverpool took every opportunity of occasioning delay. They had recourse twice to counting out the house; and at another time, though complaint had been made of their attempts to procrastinate, they

opposed the resuming of their own evidence with the same view; and this merely for the frivolous reason, that, though there was then a suitable opportunity, notice had not been previously given. But in this proceeding, other members feeling indignant at their conduct, they were overruled.

The witnesses brought by the Liverpool merchants against this humane bill were the same as they had before sent for examination to the privy council, namely, Mr. Norris, Lieutenant Matthews, and others. On the other side of the question it was not deemed expedient to bring any. It was soon perceived that it would be possible to refute the former out of their own mouths, and to do this seemed more eligible than to proceed in the other way. Mr. Pitt, however, took care to send Captain Parrey, of the Royal Navy, to Liverpool, that he might take the tonnage and internal dimensions of several slave-vessels, which were then there, supposing that these, when known, would enable the house to detect any misrepresentations, which the delegates from that town might be disposed to make upon this subject.

It was the object of the witnesses, when examined, to prove two things: first, that regulations were unnecessary, because the present mode of the transportation was sufficiently convenient for the objects of it, and was well adapted to preserve their comfort and their health. They had sufficient room, sufficient air, and sufficient provisions. When upon deck, they made merry and amused themselves with dancing. As to the mortality, or the loss of them by death in the course of their passage, it was trifling. In short, the voyage from Africa to the West Indies "was one of the happiest periods of a Negro's life."

Secondly, that if the merchants were hindered from taking less than two full sized, or three smaller Africans, to a ton, then the restrictions would operate not as the regulation, but as the utter ruin of the trade. Hence the present bill, under the specious mask of a temporary interference, sought nothing less than its abolition.

These assertions having been severally made, by the former of which it was insinuated that the African, unhappy in his own country, found in the middle passage, under the care of the

merchants, little less than an Elysian retreat, it was now proper to institute a severe inquiry into the truth of them. Mr. Pitt, Sir Charles Middleton, Mr. William Smith, and Mr. Beaufoy, took a conspicuous part on this occasion, but particularly the two latter, to whom much praise was due for the constant attention they bestowed upon this subject. Question after question was put by these to the witnesses; and from their own mouths they dragged out, by means of a cross-examination as severe as could be well instituted, the following melancholy account:—

Every slave, whatever his size might be, was found to have only five feet and six inches in length, and sixteen inches in breadth, to lie in. The floor was covered with bodies stowed or packed according to this allowance: but between the floor and the deck or ceiling were often platforms or broad shelves in the mid-way, which were covered with bodies also. The height from the floor to the ceiling, within which space the bodies on the floor and those on the platforms lay, seldom exceeded five feet eight inches, and in some cases it did not exceed four feet.

The men were chained two and two together by their hands and feet, and were chained also by means of ring-bolts, which were fastened to the deck. They were confined in this manner at least all the time they remained upon the coast, which was from six weeks to six months as it might happen.

Their allowance consisted of one pint of water a day to each person, and they were fed twice a day with yams and horse-beans.

After meals they jumped up in their irons for exercise. This was so necessary for their health, that they were whipped if they refused to do it; and this jumping had been termed dancing.

They were usually fifteen and sixteen hours below deck out of the twenty-four. In rainy weather they could not be brought up for two or three days together. If the ship was full, their situation was then distressing. They sometimes drew their breath with anxious and laborious efforts, and some died of suffocation.

With respect to their health in these voyages, the mortality,

where the African constitution was the strongest, or on the windward coast, was only about five in a hundred. In thirty-five voyages, an account of which was produced, about six in a hundred was the average number lost. But this loss was still greater at Calabar and Bonny, which were the greatest markets for slaves. This loss, too, did not include those who died, either while the vessels were lying upon the Coast, or after their arrival in the West Indies, of the disorders which they had contracted upon the voyage. Three and four in a hundred had been known to die in this latter case.

But besides these facts, which were forced out of the witnesses by means of the cross-examination which took place, they were detected in various falsehoods.

They had asserted that the ships in this trade were peculiarly constructed, or differently from others, in order that they might carry a great number of persons with convenience; whereas Captain Parrey asserted, that out of the twenty-six, which he had seen, ten only had been built expressly for this employ.

They had stated the average height between decks at about five feet and four inches. But Captain Parrey showed, that out of the nine he measured, the height in four of the smallest was only four feet eight inches, and the average height in all of them was but five feet two.

They had asserted that vessels under two hundred tons had no platforms. But by his account the four just mentioned were of this tonnage, and yet all of them had platforms either wholly or in part.

On other points they were found both to contradict themselves and one another. They had asserted, as before mentioned, that if they were restricted to less than two full-grown slaves to a ton, the trade would be ruined. But in examining into the particulars of nineteen vessels, which they produced themselves, five of them only had cargoes equal to the proportion which they stated to be necesssary to the existence of the trade. The other fourteen carried a less number of slaves (and they might have taken more on board if they had pleased); so that the average number in the nineteen was but one man and four-fifths to a ton,

or ten in a hundred below their lowest standard*. One again said, that no inconvenience arose in consequence of the narrow space allowed to each individual in these voyages. Another said, that smaller vessels were more healthy than larger, because, among other reasons, they had a less proportion of slaves as to number on board.

They were found also guilty of a wilful concealment of such facts, as they knew, if communicated, would have invalidated their own testimony. I was instrumental in detecting them on one of these occasions myself. When Mr. Dalzell was examined, he was not wholly unknown to me; my Liverpool muster-rolls told me that he had lost fifteen seamen out of forty in his last voyage. This was a sufficient ground to go upon; for generally, where the mortality of the seamen has been great, it may be laid down that the mortality of the slaves has been considerable also. I waited patiently till his evidence was nearly closed, but he had then made no unfavourable statements to the house. I desired, therefore, that a question might be put to him, and in such a manner, that he might know that they, who put it, had got a clue to his secrets. He became immediately embarrassed; his voice faltered; he confessed with trembling that he had lost a third of his sailors in his last voyage. Pressed hard immediately by other questions, he then acknowledged that he had lost one hundred and twenty, or a third of his slaves, also. But would he say that these were all he had lost in that voyage? No: twelve others had perished by an accident, for they were drowned. But were no others lost beside the one hundred and twenty and the twelve? None, he said, upon the voyage, but between twenty and thirty before he left the Coast. Thus this champion of the merchants, this advocate for the health and happiness of the slaves in the middle passage, lost nearly a hundred and sixty of the unhappy persons committed to his superior care, in a single voyage!

The evidence, on which I have now commented, having been

* The falsehood of their statements in this respect was proved again afterwards by facts. For, after the regulation had taken place, they lost fewer slaves and made greater profits.

delivered, the counsel summed up on the 17th of June, when the committee proceeded to fill up the blanks in the bill. Mr. Pitt moved that the operation of it be retrospective, and that it commence from the 10th instant. This was violently opposed by Lord Penrhyn, Mr. Gascoyne, and Mr. Brickdale, but was at length acceded to.

Sir William Dolben then proposed to apportion five men to every three tons in every ship under one hundred and fifty tons burden, which had the space of five feet between the decks, and three men to two tons in every vessel beyond one hundred and fifty tons burden, which had equal accommodation in point of height between the decks. This occasioned a very warm dispute, which was not settled for some time, and which gave rise to some beautiful and interesting speeches on the subject.

Mr. William Smith pointed out in the clearest manner many of the contradictions, which I have just stated in commenting upon the evidence; indeed he had been a principal means of detecting them. He proved how little worthy of belief the witnesses had shown themselves, and how necessary they had made the present bill by their own confession. The worthy baronet, indeed, had been too indulgent to the merchants, in the proportion he had fixed of the number of persons to be carried to the tonnage of their vessels. He then took a feeling view of what would be the wretched state of the poor Africans on board, even if the bill passed as it now stood; and conjured the house, if they would not allow them more room, at least not to infringe upon that which had been proposed.

Lord Belgrave (afterwards Grosvenor) animadverted with great ability upon the cruelties of the trade, which he said had been fully proved at the bar. He took notice of the extraordinary opposition which had been made to the bill then before them, and which he believed every gentleman, who had a proper feeling of humanity, would condemn. If the present mode of carrying on the trade received the countenance of that house, the poor unfortunate African would have occasion doubly to curse his fate. He would not only curse the womb that brought him forth, but the British nation also, whose diabolical avarice had made his

cup of misery still more bitter. He hoped that the members for Liverpool would urge no further opposition to the bill, but that they would join with the house in an effort to enlarge the empire of humanity; and that, while they were stretching out the strong arm of justice to punish the degraders of British honour and humanity in the East, they would with equal spirit exert their powers to dispense the blessings of their protection to those unhappy Africans, who were to serve them in the West.

Mr. Beaufoy entered minutely into an examination of the information, which had been given by the witnesses, and which afforded unanswerable arguments for the passing of the bill. He showed the narrow space which they themselves had been made to allow for the package of a human body, and the ingenious measures they were obliged to resort to for stowing this living cargo within the limits of the ship. He adverted next to the case of Mr. Dalzell, and showed how one dismal fact after another, each making against their own testimony, was extorted from him. He then went to the trifling mortality said to be experienced in these voyages, upon which subject he spoke in the following words: "Though the witnesses are some of them interested in the trade, and all of them parties against the bill, their confession is, that of the negroes of the windward coast, who are men of the strongest constitution which Africa affords, no less on an average than five in each hundred perish in the voyage,—a voyage, it must be remembered but of six weeks. In a twelvemonth, then, what must be the proportion of the dead? No less than forty-three in a hundred, which is seventeen times the usual rate of mortality; for all the estimates of life suppose no more than a fortieth of the people, or two and a half in the hundred, to die within the space of a year. Such then is the comparison. In the ordinary course of nature the number of persons, (including those in age and infancy, the weakest periods of existence,) who perish in the space of a twelvemonth, is at the rate of but two and a half in a hundred; but in an African voyage, notwithstaning the old are excluded and few infants admitted, so that those who are shipped are in the firmest period of life, the list of deaths presents an annual mortality of forty-three in a hundred. It presents this

mortality even in vessels from the windward coast of Africa; but in those which sail to Bonny, Benin, and the Calabars, from whence the greatest proportion of the slaves are brought, this mortality is increased by a variety of causes, (of which the greater length of the voyage is one,) and is said to be twice as large, which supposes that in every hundred the deaths annually amount to no less than eighty-six. Yet even the former comparatively low mortality, of which the counsel speaks with so much satisfaction, as a proof of the kind and compassionate treatment of the slaves, even this indolent and lethargic destruction gives to the march of death seventeen times its usual speed. It is a destruction, which, if general but for ten years, would depopulate the world, blast the purposes of its creation, and extinguish the human race."

After having gone with great ability through the other branches of the subject, he concluded in the following manner:— "Thus I have considered the various objections which have been stated to the bill, and am ashamed to reflect that it could be necessary to speak so long in defence of such a cause; for what, after all, is asked by the proposed regulations? On the part of the Africans, the whole of their purport is, that they whom you allow to be robbed of all things but life, may not unnecessarily and wantonly be deprived of life also. To the honour, to the wisdom, to the feelings of the house, I now make my appeal, perfectly confident that you will not tolerate, as senators, a traffic which, as men, you shudder to contemplate, and that you will not take upon yourselves the responsibility of this waste of existence. To the memory of former parliaments the horrors of this traffic will be an eternal reproach; yet former parliaments have not known, as you on the clearest evidence now know, the dreadful nature of this trade. Should you reject this bill, no exertions of yours to rescue from oppression the suffering inhabitants of your eastern empire; no records of the prosperous state to which, after a long and unsuccessful war, you have restored your native land; no proofs, however splendid, that under your guidance Great Britain has recovered her rank, and is again the arbitress of nations, will save your names from the stigma of everlasting dishonour. The broad mantle of this one infamy will cover with

substantial blackness the radiance of your glory, and change to feelings of abhorrence the present admiration of the world. But pardon the supposition of so impossible an event. I believe that justice and mercy may be considered as the attributes of your character, and that you will not tarnish their lustre on this occasion."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer rose next; and after having made some important observations on the evidence (which took up much time), he declared himself most unequivocally in favour of the motion made by the honourable baronet. He was convinced that the regulation proposed would not tend to the abolition of the trade; but if it even went so far, he had no hesitation openly and boldly to declare, that if it could not be carried on in a manner different from that stated by the members for Liverpool, he would retract what he had said on a former day against going into the general question; and, waving every other discussion than what had that day taken place, he would give his vote for the utter annihilation of it at once. It was a trade, which it was shocking to humanity to hear detailed. If it were to be carried on as proposed by the petitioners, it would, besides its own intrinsic baseness, be contrary to every humane and Christian principle, and to every sentiment that ought to inspire the breast of man, and would reflect the greatest dishonour on the British senate and the British nation. He, therefore, hoped that the house, being now in possession of such information as never hitherto had been brought before them, would in some measure endeavour to extricate themselves from that guilt, and from that remorse, which every one of them ought to feel for having suffered such monstrous cruelties to be practised upon an helpless and unoffending part of the human race.

Mr. Martin complimented Mr. Pitt in terms of the warmest panegyric on his noble sentiments, declaring that they reflected the greatest honour upon him both as an Englishman and as a man.

Soon after this the house divided upon the motion of Sir William Dolben. Fifty-six appeared to be in favour of it, and only five against it. The latter consisted of the two members for Liverpool and three other interested persons. This was the first division which ever took place on this important subject.

The other blanks were then filled up, and the bill was passed without further delay.

The next day, or on the 18th of June, it was carried up to the House of Lords. The slave-merchants of London, Liverpool, and Bristol, immediately presented petitions against it, as they had done in the lower house. They prayed that counsel might open their case; and though they had been driven from the Commons on account of their evidence, with disgrace, they had the effrontery to ask that they might call witnesses here also.

Counsel and evidence having been respectively heard, the bill was ordered to be committed the next day. The Lords attended according to summons. But on a motion by Dr. Warren, the Bishop of Bangor, who stated that the Lord Chancellor Thurlow was much indisposed, and that he wished to be present when the question was discussed, the committee was postponed.

It was generally thought that the reason for this postponement, and particularly as it was recommended by a prelate, was that the Chancellor might have an opportunity of forwarding this humane bill. But it was found to be quite otherwise. It appeared that the motive was, that he might give to it, by his official appearance as the chief servant of the crown in that house, all the opposition in his power. For when the day arrived which had been appointed for the discussion, and when the Lords Bathurst and Hawkesbury (afterwards Liverpool) had expressed their opinions, which were different, relative to the time when the bill should take place, he rose up and pronounced a bitter and vehement oration against it. He said, among other things, that it was full of inconsistency and nonsense from the beginning to the end. The French had lately offered large premiums for the encouragement of this trade. They were a politic people, and the presumption was, that we were doing politically wrong by abandoning it. The bill ought not to have been brought forward in this session. The introduction of it was a direct violation of the faith of the other house. It was unjust, when an assurance had been given that the question should not be agitated till next year, that this sudden fit of philanthropy, which was but a few days old, should be allowed to disturb the public mind, and

to become the occasion of bringing men to the metropolis with tears in their eyes and horror in their countenances, to deprecate the ruin of their property, which they had embarked on the faith of parliament.

The extraordinary part which the Lord Chancellor Thurlow took upon this occasion, was ascribed at the time by many who moved in the higher circles, to a shyness or misunderstanding which had taken place between him and Mr. Pitt on other matters; when, believing this bill to have been a favourite measure with the latter, he determined to oppose it. But whatever were his motives (and let us hope that he could never have been actuated by so malignant a spirit as that of sacrificing the happiness of forty thousand persons for the next year to spite the gratification of an individual), his opposition had a mischievous effect, on account of the high situation in which he stood; for he not only influenced some of the Lords themselves, but, by taking the cause of the slave-merchants so conspicuously under his wing, he gave them boldness to look up again under the stigma of their iniquitous calling, and courage even to resume vigorous operations after their disgraceful defeat. Hence arose those obstacles which will be found to have been thrown in the way of the passing of the bill from this period.

Among the Lords who are to be particularly noticed as having taken the same side as the Lord Chancellor in this debate, were the Duke of Chandos and the Earl of Sandwich. The former foresaw nothing but insurrections of the slaves in our islands, and the massacre of their masters there, in consequence of the agitation of this question. The latter expected nothing less than the ruin of our marine. He begged the house to consider how, by doing that which might bring about the abolition of this traffic, they might lessen the number of British sailors; how, by throwing it into the hands of France they might increase those of a rival nation; and how, in consequence, the flag of the latter might ride triumphant on the ocean. The Slave Trade was undoubtedly a nursery for our seamen. All objections against it in this respect were ill-founded. It was as healthy as the Newfoundland and many other trades.

The debate having closed, during which nothing more was done than filling up the blanks with the time when the bill was to begin to operate, the committee was adjourned. But the bill after this dragged on so heavily, that it would be tedious to detail the proceedings upon it from day to day. I shall, therefore, satisfy myself with the following observations concerning them :— The committee sat not less than five different times, which consumed the space of eight days, before a final decision took place. During this time, so much was it an object to throw in obstacles which might occupy the little remaining time of the session, that other petitions were presented against the bill, and leave was asked, on new pretences contained in these, that counsel might be heard again. Letters also were read from Jamaica, about the mutinous disposition of the slaves there, in consequence of the stir which had been made about the abolition; and also from merchants in France, by which large offers were made to the British merchants to furnish them with slaves. Several regulations also were proposed in this interval, some of which were negatived by majorities of only one or two voices. Of the regulations which were carried, the most remarkable were those proposed by Lord Hawkesbury (afterwards Liverpool); namely, that no insurance should be made on the slaves, except against accidents by fire and water; that persons should not be appointed as officers of vessels transporting them, who had not been a certain number of such voyages before; that a regular surgeon only should be capable of being employed in them; and that both the captain and surgeon should have bounties, if, in the course of the transportation, they had lost only two in a hundred slaves. The Duke of Chandos again, and Lord Sydney, were the most conspicuous among the opposers of this humane bill; and the Duke of Richmond, the Marquis Townshend, the Earl of Carlisle, the Bishop of London, and Earl Stanhope, among the most strenuous supporters of it. At length it passed by a majority of nineteen to eleven votes.

On the 4th of July, when the bill had been returned to the Commons, it was moved, that the amendments made in it by the Lords should be read; but as it had become a money-bill in

consequence of the bounties to be granted, and as new regulations were to be incorporated in it, it was thought proper that it should be wholly done away. Accordingly Sir William Dolben moved, that the further consideration of it should be put off till that day three months. This having been agreed upon, he then moved for leave to bring in a new bill. This was accordingly introduced, and an additional clause was inserted in it, relative to bounties, by Mr. Pitt. But on the second reading, that no obstacle might be omitted which could legally be thrown in the way of its progress, petitions were presented against it, both by the Liverpool merchants and the agent for the island of Jamaica, under the pretence that it was a new bill. Their petitions, however, were rejected, and it was committed and passed through its regular stages, and sent up to the Lords.

On its arrival there on the 5th of July, petitions from London and Liverpool still followed it. The prayer of these was against the general tendency of it, but it was solicited also that counsel might be heard in a particular case: the solicitation was complied with; after which the bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed.

On the 7th, when it was taken next into consideration, two other petitions were presented against it. But here so many objections were made to the clauses of it as they then stood, and such new matter suggested that the Duke of Richmond, who was a strenuous supporter of it, thought it best to move that the committee then sitting should be deferred till that day sevennight, in order to give time for another more perfect to originate in the lower house.

This motion having been acceded to, Sir William Dolben introduced a new one for the third time into the Commons. This included the suggestions which had been made in the Lords. It included also a regulation, on the motion of Mr. Sheridan, that no surgeon should be employed as such in the slave-vessels, except he had a testimonial that he had passed a proper examination at Surgeon's Hall. The amendments were all then agreed to, and the bill was passed through its several stages.

On the 10th of July, being now fully amended it came for a third time before the Lords; but it was no sooner brought forward than it met with the same opposition as it had experienced before. Two new petitions appeared against it; one from a certain class of persons in Liverpool, and another from Miles Peter Andrews, Esq., stating that if it passed into a law it would injure the sale of his gunpowder, and that he had rendered great services to the government during the last war, by his provision of that article. But here the Lord Chancellor Thurlow reserved himself for an effort, which, by occasioning only a day's delay, would in that particular period of the session have totally prevented the passing of the bill. He suggested certain amendments for consideration and discussion which, if they had agreed upon, must have been carried again to the lower House, and sanctioned there before the bill could have been complete. But it appeared afterwards, that there would have been no time for the latter proceeding. Earl Stanhope, therefore, pressed this circumstance peculiarly upon the lords who were present. He observed that the king was to dismiss the parliament next day, and therefore they must adopt the bill as it stood, or reject it altogether. There was no alternative, and no time was to be lost: accordingly, he moved for an immediate division on the first of the amendments proposed by Lord Thurlow. This having taken place, it was negatived. The other amendments shared the same fate; and thus, at length, passed through the Upper House, as through an ordeal as it were of fire, the first bill that ever put fetters upon that barbarous and destructive monster, the Slave Trade.

The next day, or on Friday, July the 11th, the king gave his assent to it, and, as Lord Stanhope had previously asserted in the House of Lords, concluded the session.

While the legislature was occupied in the consideration of this bill, the lords of the council continued their examinations, that they might collect as much light as possible previously to the general agitation of the question in the next session of parliament. Among others I underwent an examination: I gave my testimony first, relative to many of the natural productions of

Africa, of which I produced the specimens. These were such as I had collected in the course of my journey to Bristol and Liverpool, and elsewhere. I explained, secondly, the loss and usage of seamen in the Slave Trade. To substantiate certain points, which belonged to this branch of the subject, I left several depositions and articles of agreement for the examination of the council. With respect to others, as it would take a long time to give all the data upon which calculations had been made, and the manner of making them, I was desired to draw up a statement of particulars, and to send it to the council at a future time. I left also depositions with them, relative to certain instances of the mode of procuring and treating slaves.

The committee also for effecting the abolition of the Slave Trade continued their attention, during this period, towards the promotion of the different objects which came within the range of the institution.

They added the Rev. Dr. Coombe, in consequence of the great increase of their business, to the list of their members.

They voted thanks to Mr. Hughes, vicar of Ware, in Hertfordshire, for his excellent answer to HARRIS's *Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave Trade*, and they enrolled him among their honorary and corresponding members. Also thanks to William Roscoe, Esq., for his Answer to the same. Mr. Roscoe had not affixed his name to this pamphlet any more than to his poem of *The Wrongs of Africa;* but he made himself known to the committee as the author of both. Also thanks to William Smith and Henry Beaufoy, Esqrs., for having so successfully exposed the evidence offered by the slave merchants against the bill of Sir William Dolben, and for having drawn out of it so many facts, all making for their great object the abolition of the Slave Trade.

As the great question was to be discussed in the approaching sessions, it was moved in the committee to consider of the propriety of sending persons to Africa and the West Indies, who should obtain information relative to the different branches of the system as they existed in each of these countries, in order that they might be able to give their testimony, from their own expe-

rience, before one or both of the houses of parliament, as it might be judged proper. This proposition was discussed at two or three several meetings. It was, however, finally rejected, and principally on the following grounds:—First, It was obvious that persons sent out upon such an errand would be exposed to such dangers from various causes, that it was not improbable that both they and their testimony might be lost. Secondly, Such persons would be obliged to have recourse to falsehoods, that is, to conceal or misrepresent the objects of their destination, that they might get their intelligence with safety; which falsehoods the committee could not countenance. To which it was added, that few persons would go to these places, except they were handsomely rewarded for their trouble; but this reward would lessen the value of their evidence, as it would afford a handle to the planters and slave-merchants to say that they had been bribed.

Another circumstance which came before the committee was the following:—Many arguments were afloat at this time relative to the great impolicy of abolishing the Slave Trade, the principal of which was, that, if the English abandoned it, other foreign nations would take it up; and thus, while they gave up certain national profits themselves, the great cause of humanity would not be benefited, nor would any moral good be done by the measure. Now there was a presumption that, by means of the society instituted in Paris, the French nation might be awakened to this great subject; and that the French government might in consequence, as well as upon other considerations, be induced to favour the general feeling upon this occasion. But there was no reason to conclude, either that any other maritime people, who had been engaged in the Slave Trade, would relinquish it, or that any other, who had not yet been engaged in it, would not begin it when our countrymen should give it up. The consideration of these circumstances occupied the attention of the committee; and as Dr. Spaarman, who was said to have been examined by the privy council, was returning home, it was thought advisable to consider whether it would not be proper for the committee to select certain of their own books on the

subject of the Slave Trade, and send them by him, accompanied by a letter, to the King of Sweden, in which they should entreat his consideration of this powerful argument which now stood in the way of the cause of humanity, with a view that, as one of the princes of Europe, he might contribute to obviate it, by preventing his own subjects, in case of the dereliction of this commerce by ourselves, from embarking in it. The matter having been fully considered, it was resolved that the proposed measure would be proper, and it was accordingly adopted. By a letter received afterwards from Dr. Spaarman, it appeared that both the letter and the books had been delivered, and received graciously; and that he was authorized to say, that, unfortunately, in consequence of those hereditary possessions which had devolved upon His Majesty, he was obliged to confess that he was the sovereign of an island which had been principally peopled by African slaves, but that he had been frequently mindful of their hard case. With respect to the Slave Trade, he never heard of an instance in which the merchants of his own native realm had embarked in it; and as they had preserved their character pure in this respect, he would do all he could that it should not be sullied in the eyes of the generous English nation, by taking up, in the case which had been pointed out to him, such an odious concern.

By this time I had finished my *Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave Trade*, which I composed from materials collected chiefly during my journey to Bristol, Liverpool, and Lancaster. These materials I had admitted with great caution and circumspection; indeed I admitted none for which I could not bring official and other authentic documents, or living evidences if necessary, whose testimony could not reasonably be denied; and when I gave them to the world, I did it under the impression that I ought to give them as scrupulously as if I were to be called upon to substantiate them upon oath. It was of peculiar moment that this book should make its appearance at this time. First, Because it would give the lords of the council, who were then sitting, an opportunity of seeing many important facts, and of inquiring into their authenticity; and it might suggest to them, also, some new points, or such as had not fallen within the limits of the arrange-

ment they had agreed upon for their examinations on this subject: and secondly, Because, as the members of the House of Commons were to take the question into consideration early in the next sessions, it would give them, also, new light and information upon it before this period. Accordingly the committee ordered two thousand copies of it to be struck off, for these and other objects; and though the contents of it were most diligently sifted by the different opponents of the cause, they never even made an attempt to answer it. It continued, on the other hand, during the inquiry of the legislature, to afford the basis or grounds upon which to examine evidences on the political part of the subject; and evidences thus examined continued in their turn to establish it.

Among the other books ordered to be printed by the committee within the period now under our consideration, were a new edition of two thousand of the DEAN OF MIDDLEHAM'S *Letter*, and another of three thousand of FALCONBRIDGE'S *Account of the Slave Trade.*

The committee continued to keep up, during the same period, a communication with many of their old correspondents, whose names have been already mentioned. But they received, also, letters from others, who had not hitherto addressed them: namely, from Ellington Wright, of Erith; Dr. Franklin, of Philadelphia; Eustace Kentish, Esq., high sheriff for the county of Huntingdon; Governor Bouchier; the Reverend Charles Symmons, of Haverfordwest; and from John York and William Downes, Esquires, high sheriffs for the counties of York and Hereford.

A letter, also, was read in this interval from Mr. Evans, a dissenting clergyman, of Bristol, stating that the elders of several Baptist churches, forming the western Baptist association, who had met at Portsmouth Common, had resolved to recommend it to the ministers and members of the same, to unite with the committee in the promotion of the great object of their institution.

Another from Mr. Andrew Irvin, of the Island of Grenada, in which he confirmed the wretched situation of many of the slaves there, and in which he gave the outlines of a plan for

bettering their condition, as well as that of those in the other islands.

Another from I. L. Wynne, Esq., of Jamaica. In this he gave an afflicting account of the suffering and unprotected state of the slaves there, which it was high time to rectify. He congratulated the committee on their institution, which he thought would tend to promote so desirable an end; but desired them not to stop short of the total abolition of the Slave Trade, as no other measure would prove effectual against the evils of which he complained. This trade, he said, was utterly unnecessary, as his own plantation, on which his slaves had increased rapidly by population, and others which he knew to be similarly circumstanced, would abundantly testify. He concluded by promising to give the committee such information from time to time as might be useful on this important subject.

The session of parliament having closed, the committee thought it right to make a report to the public: in which they gave an account of the great progress of their cause since the last; of the state in which they then were; and of the unjustifiable conduct of their opponents, who industriously misrepresented their views, but particularly by attributing to them the design of abolishing slavery: and they concluded by exhorting their friends not to relax their endeavours on account of favourable appearances; but to persevere, as if nothing had been done, under the pleasing hope of an honourable triumph.

And now having given the substance of the labours of the committee from its formation to the present time, I cannot conclude this chapter without giving to the worthy members of it that tribute of affectionate and grateful praise, which is due to them for their exertions in having forwarded the great cause which was intrusted to their care. And this I can do with more propriety, because, having been so frequently absent from them when they were engaged in the pursuit of this their duty, I cannot be liable to the suspicion, that in bestowing commendation upon them I am bestowing it upon myself. From about the end of May, 1787, to the middle of July, 1788, they had no less than fifty-one committees. These generally occupied them from about

six in the evening till about eleven at night. In the intervals between the committees they were often occupied, having each of them some object committed to his charge. It is remarkable, too, that though they were all, except one, engaged in business or trade, and though they had the same calls as other men for innocent recreation, and the same interruptions of their health, there were individuals who were not absent more than five or six times within this period. In the course of the thirteen months, during which they had exercised this public trust, they had printed, and and afterwards distributed, not at random, but judiciously, and through respectable channels, (besides 26,526 reports, accounts of debates in parliament, and other small papers,) no less than 51,432 pamphlets, or books.

Nor was the effect produced within this short period otherwise than commensurate with the efforts used. In May, 1787, the only public notice taken of this great cause was by this committee of twelve individuals, of whom all were little known to the world except Mr. Granville Sharp. But in July, 1788, it had attracted the notice of several distinguished individuals in France and Germany; and in our own country it had come within the notice of the government, and a branch of it had undergone a parliamentary discussion and restraint. It had arrested, also, the attention of the nation, and it had produced a kind of holy flame, or enthusiasm, and this to a degree and to an extent never before witnessed. Of the purity of this flame no better proof can be offered, than that even Bishops deigned to address an obscure committee, consisting principally of Quakers; and that Churchmen and Dissenters forgot their difference of religious opinions, and joined their hands, all over the kingdom, in its support.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Continuation from June 1788 to July 1789.—Author travels to collect further evidence; great difficulties in obtaining it; forms committees on his tour.—Privy council resume the examinations; inspect cabinet of African productions; obliged to leave many of the witnesses in behalf of the abolition unexamined; prepare their report.—Labours of the committee in the interim.—Proceedings of the planters and others.—Report laid on the table of the House of Commons.—Introduction of the question, and debate there; twelve propositions deduced from the report and reserved for future discussion; day of discussion arrives; opponents refuse to argue from the report; require new evidence; this granted and introduced; further consideration of the subject deferred to the next session.—Renewal of Sir William Dolben's bill.—Death and character of Ramsay.

MATTERS had now become serious. The gauntlet had been thrown down and accepted. The combatants had taken their stations, and the contest was to be renewed, which was to be decided soon on the great theatre of the nation. The committee by the very act of their institution had pronounced the Slave Trade to be criminal. They, on the other hand, who were concerned in it, had denied the charge. It became the one to prove, and the other to refute it, or to fall in the ensuing session.

The committee, in this perilous situation, were anxious to find out such other persons, as might become proper evidences before the privy council. They had hitherto sent there only nine or ten, and they had then only another, whom they could count upon for this purpose, in their view. The proposal of sending persons to Africa, and the West Indies, who might come back and report what they had witnessed, had been already negatived. The question then was, what they were to do. Upon this they deliberated, and the result was an application to me to undertake a journey to different parts of the kingdom for this purpose.

When this determination was made, I was at Teston, writing a long letter to the privy council on the ill usage and mortality of the seamen employed in the Slave Trade, which it had been previously agreed should be received as evidence there. I thought it

proper, however, before I took my departure, to form a system of questions upon the general subject. These I divided into six tables. The first related to the productions of Africa, and the dispositions and manners of the natives. The second, to the methods of reducing them to slavery. The third, to the manner of bringing them to the ships, their value, the medium of exchange, and other circumstances. The fourth, to their transportation. The fifth, to their treatment in the colonies. The sixth, to the seamen employed in the trade. These tables contained together one hundred and forty-five questions. My idea was that they should be printed on a small sheet of paper, which should be folded up in seven or eight leaves, of the length and breadth of a small almanac, and then be sent in franks to our different correspondents. These, when they had them, might examine persons capable of giving evidence, who might live in their neighbourhoods, or fall in their way, and return us their examinations by letter.

The committee having approved and printed the tables of questions, I began my tour. I had selected the southern counties from Kent to Cornwall for it. I had done this, because these included the great stations of the ships of war in ordinary; and as these were all under the superintendence of Sir Charles Middleton, as comptroller of the navy, I could get an introduction to those on board them. Secondly, because sea-faring people, when they retire from a marine life, usually settle in some town or village upon the coast.

Of this tour I shall not give the reader any very particular account. I shall mention only those things which are most worthy of his notice in it. At Poole, in Dorsetshire, I laid the foundation of a committee, to act in harmony with that of London for the promotion of the cause. Moses Neave, of the respectable society of the Quakers, was the chairman; Thomas Bell, the secretary; and Ellis B. Metford and the Reverend Mr. Davis and others the committee. This was the third committee which had been instituted in the country for this purpose. That at Bristol, under Mr. Joseph Harford as chairman, and Mr. Lunell as secretary, had been the first: and that at Manchester,

under Mr. Thomas Walker as chairman, and Mr. Samuel Jackson as secretary, had been the second.

As Poole was a great place for carrying on the trade to Newfoundland, I determined to examine the assertion of the Earl of Sandwich in the House of Lords, when he said, in the debate on Sir William Dolben's bill, that the Slave Trade was not more fatal to seamen than the Newfoundland and some others. This assertion I knew at the time to be erroneous, as far as my own researches had been concerned: for out of twenty-four vessels, which had sailed out of the port of Bristol in that employ, only two sailors were upon the dead list. In sixty vessels from Poole, I found but four lost. At Dartmouth, where I went afterwards on purpose, I found almost a similar result. On conversing, however, with Governor Holdsworth, I learnt that the year 1786 had been more fatal than any other in this trade. I learnt that in consequence of extraordinary storms and hurricanes, no less than five sailors had died and twenty-one had been drowned in eighty-three vessels from that port. Upon this statement I determined to look into the muster-rolls of the trade there for two or three years together. I began by accident with the year 1769, and I went on to the end of 1772. About eighty vessels on an average had sailed thence in each of these years. Taking the loss in these years, and compounding it with that in the fatal year, three sailors had been lost; but taking it in these four years by themselves, only two had been lost in twenty-four vessels so employed. On a comparison with the Slave Trade, the result would be, that two vessels to Africa would destroy more seamen than eighty-three sailing to Newfoundland. There was this difference also to be noted, that the loss in the one trade was generally by the weather or by accident, but in the other by cruel treatment or disease; and that they who went out in a declining state of health in the one, came home generally recovered; whereas they, who went out robust in the other, came home in a shattered condition.

At Plymouth I laid the foundation of another committee. The late William Cookworthy, the late John Prideaux, and James Fox, all of the society of the Quakers, and Mr. George

Leach, Samuel Northcote, and John Saunders, had a principal share in forming it. Sir William Ellford was chosen chairman.

From Plymouth I journeyed on to Falmouth, and from thence to Exeter, where having meetings with the late Mr. Samuel Milford, the late Mr. George Manning, the Reverend James Manning, Thomas Sparkes, and others, a desire became manifest among them of establishing a committee there. This was afterwards effected; and Mr. Milford, who at a general meeting of the inhabitants of Exeter, on the 10th of June, on this great subject, had been called by those present to the chair, was appointed the chairman of it.

With respect to evidence, which was the great object of this tour, I found myself often very unpleasantly situated in collecting it. I heard of many persons capable of giving it to our advantage, to whom I could get no introduction. I had to go after these many miles out of my established route. Not knowing me, they received me coldly, and even suspiciously; while I fell in with others, who, considering themselves, on account of their concerns and connexions, as our opponents, treated me in an uncivil manner.

But the difficulties and disappointments in other respects which I experienced in this tour,—even where I had an introduction, and where the parties were not interested in the continuance of the Slave Trade,—were greater than people in general would have imagined. One would have thought, considering the great enthusiasm of the nation on this important subject, that they who could have given satisfactory information upon it, would have rejoiced to do it. But I found it otherwise, and this frequently to my sorrow. There was an aversion in persons to appear before such a tribunal as they conceived the privy council to be. With men of shy or timid character this operated as an insuperable barrier in their way. But it operated more or less upon all. It was surprising to see what little circumstances affected many. When I took out my pen and ink to put down the information which a person was giving me, he became evidently embarrassed and frightened. He began to excuse himself from staying, by alleging that he had nothing more to

communicate, and he took himself away as quickly as he could with decency. The sight of the pen and ink had lost me so many good evidences, that I was obliged wholly to abandon the use of them, and to betake myself to other means. I was obliged for the future to commit my tables of questions to memory; and endeavour by practice to put down, after the examination of a person, such answers as he had given me to each of them.

Others went off, because it happened that immediately on my interview, I acquainted them with the nature of my errand, and solicited their attendance in London. Conceiving that I had no right to ask them such a favour, or terrified at the abruptness and apparent awfulness of my request, some of them gave me an immediate denial, which they would never afterwards retract. I began to perceive in time that it was only by the most delicate management that I could get forward on these occasions. I resolved, therefore, for the future, except in particular cases, that when I should be introduced to persons who had a competent knowledge of this trade, I would talk with them upon it as upon any ordinary subject, and then leave them without saying anything about their becoming evidences. I would take care, however, to commit all their conversation to writing, when it was over; and I would then try to find out that person among their relations or friends, who could apply to them for this purpose, with the least hazard of a refusal.

There were others, also, who, though they were not so much impressed by the considerations mentioned, yet objected to give their public testimony. Those whose livelihood, or promotion, or expectations, were dependent upon the government of the country, were generally backward on these occasions. Though they thought they discovered in the parliamentary conduct of Mr. Pitt, a bias in favour of the cause, they knew to a certainty that the Lord Chancellor Thurlow was against it. They conceived, therefore, that the administration was at least divided upon the question; and they were fearful of being called upon, lest they should give offence, and thus injure their prospects in life. This objection was very prevalent in that part of the kingdom which I had selected for my tour.

The reader can hardly conceive how my mind was agitated and distressed on these different accounts. To have travelled more than two months,—to have seen many who could have materially served our cause,—and to have lost most of them,—was very trying. And though it is true that I applied a remedy, I was not driven to the adoption of it, till I had performed more than half my tour. Suffice it to say, that after having travelled upwards of sixteen hundred miles backwards and forwards, and having conversed with forty-seven persons, who were capable of promoting the cause by their evidence, I could only prevail upon nine, by all the interest I could make, to be examined.

On my return to London, whither I had been called up by the committee, to take upon me the superintendence of the evidence, which the privy council was now ready again to hear, I found my brother: he was then a young officer in the navy; and as I knew he felt as warmly as I did in this great cause, I prevailed upon him to go to Havre de Grace, the great slave-port in France, where he might make his observations for two or three months, and then report what he had seen and heard; so that we might have some one to counteract any false statement of things, which might be made relative to the subject in that quarter.

At length the examinations were resumed, and with them the contest, in which our own reputation and the fate of our cause were involved. The committee for the abolition had discovered one or two willing evidences during my absence; and Mr. Wilberforce, who was now recovered from his severe indisposition, had found one or two others. These, added to my own, made a respectable body; but we had sent no more than four or five of these to the council, when the king's illness unfortunately stopped our career. For nearly five weeks between the middle of November and January, the examinations were interrupted or put off, so that at the latter period we began to fear, that there would be scarcely time to hear the rest; for not only the privy council report was to be printed, but the contest itself was to be decided by the evidence contained in it, in the existing session.

The examinations, however, went on; but they went on only slowly, being still subject to interruption from the same unfortunate cause. Among others I offered my mite of information again. I wished the council to see more of my African productions and manufactures, that they might really know what Africa was capable of affording, instead of the Slave Trade; and that they might make a proper estimate of the genius and talents of the natives. The samples which I had collected, had been obtained by great labour, and at no inconsiderable expense: for whenever I had notice that a vessel had arrived immediately from that continent, I never hesitated to go, unless under the most pressing engagements elsewhere, even as far as Bristol, if I could pick up but a single new article. The lords having consented, I selected several things for their inspection out of my box,—of the contents of which the following account may not be unacceptable to the reader:—

The first division of the box consisted of woods of about four inches square, all polished. Among these were mahogany of five different sorts, tulip-wood, satin-wood, cam-wood, bar-wood, fustic, black and yellow ebony, palm-tree, mangrove, calabash, and date. There were seven woods, of which the native names were remembered; three of these, Tumiah, Samain, and Jimlaké, were of a yellow colour; Acajoú was of a beautiful deep crimson; Bork and Quellé were apparently fit for cabinet work; and Benten was the wood of which the natives made their canoes. Of the various other woods the names had been forgotten, nor were they known in England at all. One of them was of a fine purple; and from two others, upon which the privy council had caused experiments to be made, a strong yellow, a deep orange, and a flesh-colour were extracted.

The second division included ivory and musk; four species of pepper, the long, the black, the Cayenne, and the Malaguetta; three species of gum, namely, Senegal, Copal, and ruber astringens; cinnamon, rice, tobacco, indigo, white and Nankin cotton, Guinea corn, and millet; three species of beans, of which two were used for food, and the other for dyeing orange; two species of tamarinds, one for food, and the other to give whiteness to the

teeth; pulse, seeds, and fruits of various kinds, some of the latter of which Dr. Spaarman had pronounced, from a trial during his residence in Africa, to be peculiarly valuable as drugs.

The third division contained an African loom, and an African spindle with spun cotton round it; cloths of cotton of various kinds made by the natives, some white, but others dyed by them of different colours, and others in which they had interwoven European silk; cloths and bags made of grass, and fancifully coloured; ornaments made of the same materials; ropes made from a species of aloes and others, remarkably strong, from grass and straw; fine string made from the fibres of the roots of trees; soap of two kinds, one of which was formed from an earthy substance; pipe-bowls made of clay, and of a brown red; one of these, which came from the village of Dakard, was beautifully ornamented by black devices burnt in, and was besides highly glazed; another brought from Galàm, was made of earth, which was richly impregnated with little particles of gold; trinkets made by the natives from their own gold; knives and daggers made by them from our bar-iron; and various other articles, such as bags, sandals, dagger-cases, quivers, grisgris, all made of leather of their own manufacture, and dyed of various colours, and ingeniously sewed together.

The fourth division consisted of the thumb-screw, *speculum oris*, and chains and shackles of different kinds, collected at Liverpool. To these were added, iron neck-collars, and other instruments of punishment and confinement used in the West Indies, and collected at other places. The instrument also, by which Charles Horseler was mentioned to have been killed, in a former chapter, was to be seen among these.

We were now advanced far into February, when we were alarmed by the intelligence that the lords of the council were going to prepare their report. At this time we had sent but few persons to them to examine, in comparison with our opponents, and we had yet eighteen to introduce: for answers had come into my tables of questions from several places, and persons had been pointed out to us by our correspondents, who had increased our list of evidences to this number. I wrote therefore to them, at

the desire of the committee for the abolition, and gave them the names of the eighteen, and requested that all of them might be examined. I requested also, that they would order, for their own inspection, certain muster-rolls of vessels from Poole and Dartmouth, that they might be convinced that the objection which the Earl of Sandwich had made in the House of Lords, against the abolition of the Slave Trade, had no solid foundation. In reply to my first request they informed me, that it was impossible, in the advanced state of the session, (it being then the middle of March,) that the examinations of so many could be taken; but I was at liberty, in conjunction with the Bishop of London, to select eight for this purpose. This occasioned me to address them again; and I then found, to my surprise and sorrow, that even this last number was to be diminished; for I was informed in writing, "that the Bishop of London having laid my last letter before their lordships, they had agreed to meet on the Saturday next, and on the Tuesday following, for the purpose of receiving the evidence of some of the gentlemen named in it. And it was their lordships' desire that I would give notice to any three of them (whose information I might consider as the most material) of the above determination, that they might attend the committee accordingly."

This answer, considering the difficulties we had found in collecting a body of evidence, and the critical situation in which we then were, was peculiarly distressing; but we had no remedy left us, nor could we reasonably complain. Three therefore were selected, and they were sent to deliver their testimony on their arrival in town.

But before the last of these had left the council-room, who should come up to me but Dr. Arnold? He had but lately arrived at Bristol from Africa; and having heard from our friends there that we had been daily looking for him, he had come to us in London. He and Mr. Gardiner were the two surgeons, as mentioned in a former chapter, who had promised me, when I was in Bristol, in the year 1787, that they would keep a journal of facts for me during the voyages they were then going to perform. They had both of them kept this promise. Gardiner, I found, had died upon the coast; and his journal, having been dis-

covered at his death, had been buried with him in great triumph. But Arnold had survived, and he came now to offer us his services in the cause.

As it was a pity that such correct information as that taken down in writing upon the spot should be lost (for all the other evidences, except Dr. Spaarman and Mr. Wadstrom, had spoken from their memory only), I made all the interest I could to procure a hearing for Mr. Arnold. Pleading now for the examination of him only, and under these particular circumstances, I was attended to. It was consented, in consequence of the little time which was now left for preparing and printing the report, that I should make out his evidence from his journal under certain heads. This I did. Mr. Arnold swore to the truth of it, when so drawn up, before Edward Montague, Esquire, a master in Chancery. He then delivered the paper in which it was contained to the lords of the council, who, on receiving it, read it throughout, and then questioned him upon it.

At this time, also, my brother returned with accounts and papers relative to the Slave Trade from Havre de Grace; but as I had pledged myself to offer no other person to be examined, his evidence was lost. Thus, after all the pains we had taken, and in a contest, too, on the success of which our own reputation and the fate of Africa depended, we were obliged to fight the battle with sixteen less than we could have brought into the field; while our opponents, on the other hand, on account of their superior advantages, had mustered all their forces, not having omitted a single man.

I do not know of any period of my life in which I suffered so much, both in body and mind, as from the time of resuming these public inquiries by the privy council, to the time when they were closed. For I had my weekly duty to attend at the committee for the abolition during this interval. I had to take down the examinations of all the evidences who came to London, and to make certain copies of these. I had to summon these to town, and to make provision against all accidents; and here I was often troubled by means of circumstances, which unexpectedly occurred, lest, when committees of the council had been purposely appointed

to hear them, they should not be forthcoming at the time. I had also a new and extensive correspondence to keep up; for the tables of questions which had been sent down to our correspondents, brought letters almost innumerable on this subject, and they were always addressed to me. These not only required answers of themselves, but as they usually related to persons capable of giving their testimony, and contained the particulars of what they could state, they occasioned fresh letters to be written to others. Hence the writing of ten or twelve daily became necessary.

But the contents of these letters afforded the circumstances, which gave birth to so much suffering. They contained usually some affecting tale of woe. At Bristol my feelings had been harassed by the cruel treatment of the seamen, which had come to my knowledge there: but now I was doomed to see this treatment over again in many other melancholy instances; and, additionally, to take in the various sufferings of the unhappy slaves. These accounts I could seldom get time to read till late in the evening, and sometimes not till midnight, when the letters containing them were to be answered. The effect of these accounts was in some instances to overwhelm me for a time in tears, and in others to produce a vivid indignation, which affected my whole frame. Recovering from these, I walked up and down the room: I felt fresh vigour, and made new determinations of perpetual warfare against this impious trade. I implored strength that I might succeed. I then sat down, and continued my work as long as my wearied eyes would permit me to see. Having been agitated in this manner, I went to bed; but my rest was frequently broken by the visions which floated before me. When I awoke, these renewed themselves to me, and they flitted about with me for the remainder of the day. Thus I was kept continually harassed: my mind was confined to one gloomy and heart-breaking subject for months. It had no respite, and my health began now materially to suffer.

But the contents of these letters were particularly grievous, on account of the severe labours which they necessarily entailed upon me in other ways than those which have been mentioned. It was my duty, while the privy council examinations went on,

not only to attend to all the evidence which was presented to us by our correspondents, but to find out and select the best. The happiness of millions depended upon it. Hence I was often obliged to travel during these examinations, in order to converse with those who had been pointed out to us as capable of giving their testimony; and, that no time might be lost, to do this in the night. More than two hundred miles in a week were sometimes passed over on these occasions.

The disappointments too, which I frequently experienced in these journeys, increased the poignancy of the suffering, which arose from a contemplation of the melancholy cases which I had thus travelled to bring forward to the public view. The reader at present can have no idea of these. I have been sixty miles to visit a person, of whom I had heard, not only as possessing important knowledge, but as espousing our opinions on this subject. I have at length seen him. He has applauded my pursuit at our first interview. He has told me, in the course of our conversation, that neither my own pen, nor that of any other man, could describe adequately the horrors of the Slave Trade, horrors which he himself had witnessed. He has exhorted me to perseverance in this noble cause. Could I have wished for a more favourable reception?—But mark the issue. He was the nearest relation of a rich person concerned in the traffic; and if he were to come forward with his evidence publicly, he should ruin all his expectations from that quarter. In the same week I have visited another at a still greater distance. I have met with similar applause. I have heard him describe scenes of misery which he had witnessed, and on the relation of which he himself almost wept. But mark the issue again.—"I am a surgeon," says he: "through that window you see a spacious house; it is occupied by a West Indian. The medical attendance upon his family is of considerable importance to the temporal interests of mine. If I give you my evidence I lose his patronage. At the house above him lives an East Indian. The two families are connected: I fear, if I lose the support of one, I shall lose that of the other also: but I will give you privately all the intelligence in my power."

The reader may now conceive the many miserable hours I

must have spent, after such visits, in returning home; and how grievously my heart must have been afflicted by these cruel disappointments, but more particularly where they arose from causes inferior to those which have been now mentioned, or from little frivolous excuses, or idle and unfounded conjectures, unworthy of beings expected to fill a moral station in life. Yes, O man! often in these solitary journeyings have I exclaimed against the baseness of thy nature, when reflecting on the little paltry considerations which have smothered thy benevolence, and hindered thee from succouring an oppressed brother. And yet, on a further view of things, I have reasoned myself into a kinder feeling towards thee. For I have been obliged to consider ultimately, that there were both lights and shades in the human character; and that, if the bad part of our nature was visible on these occasions, the nobler part of it ought not to be forgotten. While I passed a censure upon those, who were backward in serving this great cause of humanity and justice, how many did I know, who were toiling in the support of it! I drew also this consolation from my reflections, that I had done my duty; that I had left nothing untried or undone; that amidst all these disappointments I had collected information, which might be useful at a future time; and that such disappointments were almost inseparable from the prosecution of a cause of such magnitude, and where the interests of so many were concerned:—

Having now given a general account of my own proceedings, I shall state those of the committee; or show how they contributed, by fulfilling the duties of their several departments, to promote the cause in the interim.

In the first place they completed the rules, or code of laws, for their own government.

They continued to adopt and circulate books, that they might still enlighten the public mind on the subject, and preserve it interested in favour of their institution. They kept the press indeed almost constantly going for this purpose. They printed, within the period mentioned, Ramsay's *Address on the proposed Bill for the Abolition; The Speech of Henry Beaufoy, Esq., on Sir William Dolben's Bill*, of which an extract is given in Chap. xxiii.; *Notes by*

a Planter on the two Reports from the Committee of the Honourable House of Assembly of Jamaica; Observations on the Slave Trade by Mr. Wadstrom; and DICKSON'S *Letters on Slavery*. These were all new publications. To those they added others of less note, with new editions of the old.

They voted their thanks to the Rev. Mr. Gifford, for his excellent Sermon on the Slave Trade; to the pastor and congregation of the Baptist church at Maze Pond, Southwark, for their liberal subscription; and to John Barton, one of their own members, for the services he had rendered them. The latter, having left his residence in town for one in the country, solicited permission to resign, and hence this mark of approbation was given to him. He was continued also as an honorary and corresponding member.

They elected David Hartley and Richard Sharpe, Esqs., into their own body, and Alexander Jaffray, Esq., the Rev. Charles Symmons, of Haverfordwest, and the Rev. T. Burgess (afterwards bishop of Salisbury), as honorary and corresponding members. The latter had written *Considerations on the Abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade, upon grounds of natural, religious, and political Duty*, which had been of great service to the cause.

Of the new correspondents of the committee within this period I may first mention Henry Taylor, of North Shields; William Proud, of Hull; the Rev. T. Gisborne, of Yokall Lodge; and William Ellford, Esq., of Plymouth. The latter, as chairman of the Plymouth committee, sent up for inspection an engraving of a plan and section of a slave-ship, in which the bodies of the slaves were seen stowed in the proportion of rather less than one to a ton. This happy invention gave all those who saw it a much better idea, than they could otherwise have had, of the horrors of their transportation, and contributed greatly, as will appear afterwards, to impress the public in favour of our cause.

The next, whom I shall mention, was C. L. Evans, Esq., of West Bromwich; the Rev. T. Clarke, of Hull; S. P. Wolferstan, of Stratford, near Tamworth; Edmund Lodge, Esq., of Halifax; the Rev. Caleb Rotheram, of Kendal; and Mr. Campbell Hali-

burton, of Edinburgh. The news which Mr. Haliburton sent was very agreeable. He informed us that, in consequence of the great exertions of Mr. Alison, an institution had been formed in Edinburgh, similar to that in London, which would take all Scotland under its care and management, as far as related to this great subject. He mentioned Lord Gardenston as the chairman; Sir William Forbes as the deputy-chairman; himself as the secretary; and Lord Napier, Professor Andrew Hunter, Professor Greenfield, and William Creech, Adam Rolland, Alexander Ferguson, John Dickson, John Erskine, John Campbell, Archibald Gibson, Archibald Fletcher, and Horatius Canning, Esqrs., as the committee.

The others were, the Rev. J. Bidlake, of Plymouth; Joseph Storrs, of Chesterfield; William Fothergill, of Carr End, Yorkshire; J. Seymour, of Coventry; Moses Neave, of Poole; Joseph Taylor, of Scarborough; Timothy Clark, of Doncaster; Thomas Davis, of Milverton; George Croker Fox, of Falmouth; Benjamin Grubb, of Clonmell in Ireland; Sir William Forbes, of Edinburgh; the Rev. J. Jamieson, of Forfar; and Joseph Gurney, of Norwich; the latter of whom sent up a remittance, and intelligence at the same time, that a committee, under Mr. Leigh, so often before mentioned, had been formed in that city *.

But the committee in London, while they were endeavouring to promote the object of their institution at home, continued their exertions for the same purpose abroad within this period.

They kept up a communication with the different societies established in America.

They directed their attention also to the continent of Europe. They had already applied, as I mentioned before, to the king of Sweden in favour of their cause, and had received a gracious answer. They now attempted to interest other Potentates in it. For this purpose they bound up in an elegant manner two sets of the *Essays on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, and on the Impolicy of the Slave Trade*, and sent them to the Chevalier de Pinto, in Portugal. They bound up in a similar manner

* On the removal of Mr. Leigh from Norwich, Dr. Pretyman, precentor of Lincoln and a prebend of Norwich, succeeded him.

three sets of the same, and sent them to Mr. Eden (afterwards Lord Aukland), at Madrid, to be given to the king of Spain, the Count d'Aranda, and the Marquis del Campomanes.

They kept up their correspondence with the committee at Paris, which had greatly advanced itself in the eyes of the French nation; so that, when the different bailliages sent deputies to the states-general, they instructed them to take the Slave Trade into their consideration as a national object, and with a view to its abolition.

They kept up their correspondence with Dr. Frossard of Lyons. He had already published in France on the subject of the Slave Trade; and now he offered the committee to undertake the task, so long projected by them, of collecting such arguments and facts concerning it, and translating them into different languages, as might be useful in forwarding their views in foreign parts.

They addressed letters also to various individuals, to Monsieur Snetlage, doctor of laws at Halle in Saxony; to Monsieur Ladebat, of Bordeaux; to the Marquis de Feuillade d'Aubusson, at Paris; and to Monsieur Necker. The latter in his answer replied in part as follows: "As this great question," says he, "is not in my department, but in that of the minister for the colonies, I cannot interfere in it directly, but I will give indirectly all the assistance in my power. I have for a long time taken an interest in the general alarm on this occasion, and in the noble alliance of the friends of humanity in favour of the injured Africans. Such an attempt throws a new lustre over your nation. It is not yet, however, a national object in France; but the moment may perhaps come, and I shall think myself happy in preparing the way for it. You must be aware, however, of the difficulties which we shall have to encounter on our side of the water; for our colonies are much more considerable than yours; so that in the view of political interest we are not on an equal footing. It will therefore be necessary to find some middle line at first, as it cannot be expected that humanity alone will be the governing principle of mankind."

But the day was now drawing near, when it was expected that this great contest would be decided. Mr. Wilberforce, on

the 19th of March, rose up in the House of Commons and desired the resolution to be read, by which the house stood pledged to take the Slave Trade into their consideration in the then session. He then moved that the house should resolve itself into a committee of the whole house on Thursday, the 23rd of April, for this purpose. This motion was agreed to; after which he moved for certain official documents necessary to throw light upon the subject in the course of its discussion.

This motion, by means of which the great day of trial was now fixed, seemed to be the signal for the planters, merchants, and other interested persons to begin a furious opposition. Meetings were accordingly called by advertisement. At these meetings much warmth and virulence were manifested in debate, and propositions breathing a spirit of anger were adopted. It was suggested there, in the vehemence of passion, that the islands could exist independently of the mother country; nor were even threats withheld to intimidate government from effecting the abolition.

From this time, also, the public papers began to be filled with such statements as were thought most likely to influence the members of the House of Commons, previously to the discussion of the question.

The first impression attempted to be made upon them was with respect to the slaves themselves. It was contended, and attempted to be shown by the revival of the old argument of human sacrifices in Africa, that these were better off in the islands than in their own country. It was contended, also, that they were people of very inferior capacities, and but little removed from the brute creation; whence an inference was drawn that their treatment, against which so much clamour had arisen, was adapted to their intellect and feelings.

The next attempt was to degrade the abolitionists in the opinion of the house, by showing the wildness and absurdity of their schemes. It was again insisted upon that emancipation was the real object of the former; so that thousands of slaves would be let loose in the islands to rob or perish, and who could never be brought back again into habits of useful industry.

An attempt was then made to excite their pity in behalf of the planters. The abolition, it was said, would produce insurrections among the slaves. But insurrections would produce the massacre of their masters; and, if any of these should happily escape from butchery, they would be reserved only for ruin.

An appeal was then made to them on the ground of their own interest and of that of the people whom they represented. It was stated that the ruin of the islands would be the ruin of themselves and of the country. Its revenue would be half annihilated; its naval strength would decay. Merchants, manufacturers and others would come to beggary. But in this deplorable situation they would expect to be indemnified for their losses. Compensation, indeed, must follow: it could not be withheld. But what would be the amount of it? The country would have no less than from eighty to a hundred millions to pay the sufferers; and it would be driven to such distress in paying this sum as it had never before experienced.

The last attempt was to show them that a regulation of the trade was all that was now wanted. While this would remedy the evils complained of, it would prevent the mischief which would assuredly follow the abolition. The planters had already done their part. The assemblies of the different islands had most of them made wholesome laws upon the subject. The very bills passed for this purpose in Jamaica and Grenada had arrived in England, and might be seen by the public; the great grievances had been redressed; no slave could now be mutilated or wantonly killed by his owner; one man could not now maltreat, or bruise, or wound the slave of another; the aged could not now be turned off to perish by hunger. There were laws, also, relative to the better feeding and clothing of the slaves. It remained only that the trade to Africa should be put under as wise and humane regulations as the slavery in the islands had undergone.

These different statements, appearing now in the public papers from day to day, began, in this early stage of the question, when the subject in all its bearings was known but to few, to make a considerable impression upon those, who were soon to be called to the decision of it. But that which had the greatest effect

upon them, was the enormous amount of the compensation, which, it was said, must be made. This statement against the abolition was making its way so powerfully, that Archdeacon Paley thought it his duty to write, and to send to the committee, a little treatise called *Arguments against the unjust Pretensions of Slave Dealers and Holders, to be indemnified by pecuniary Allowances at the public expense, in case the Slave Trade should be abolished.* This treatise, when the substance of it was detailed in the public papers, had its influence upon several members of the House of Commons; but there were others who had been, as it were, panic-struck by the statement. These in their fright seemed to have lost the right use of their eyes, or to have looked through a magnifying glass. With these the argument of emancipation, which they would have rejected at another time as ridiculous, obtained now easy credit. The massacres too, and the ruin, though only conjectural, they admitted also. Hence some of them deserted our cause wholly, while others, wishing to do justice as far as they could to the slaves on the one hand, and to their own countrymen on the other, adopted a middle line of conduct, and would go no further than the regulation of the trade.

While these preparations were making by our opponents to prejudice the minds of those who were to be the judges in this contest, Mr. Pitt presented the privy council report at the bar of the House of Commons; and as it was a large folio volume, and contained the evidence upon which the question was to be decided, it was necessary that time should be given to the members to peruse it. Accordingly, the 12th of May was appointed, instead of the 23rd of April, for the discussion of the question.

This postponement of the discussion of the question gave time to all parties to prepare themselves further. The merchants and planters availed themselves of it to collect petitions to parliament from interested persons, against the abolition of the trade, to wait upon members of parliament by deputation, in order to solicit their attendance in their favour, and to renew their injurious paragraphs in the public papers. The committee for the abolition availed themselves of it to reply to these; and here Dr. Dickson, who had been secretary to Governor Hey,

in Barbados, and who had offered the committee his *Letters on Slavery* before mentioned, and his services also, was of singular use. Many members of parliament availed themselves of it to retire into the country to read the report. Among the latter were Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Pitt. In this retirement they discovered, notwithstanding the great disadvantages under which we had laboured with respect to evidence, that our cause was safe, and that, as far as it was to be decided by reason and sound policy, it would triumph. It was in this retirement that Mr. Pitt made those able calculations which satisfied him for ever after, as the minister of the country, as to the safety of the great measure of the abolition of the Slave Trade; for he had clearly proved, that not only the islands could go on in a flourishing state without supplies from the coast of Africa, but that they were then in a condition to do it.

At length the 12th of May arrived, Mr. Wilberforce rose up in the Commons and moved the order of the day for the house to resolve itself into a committee of the whole house, to take into consideration the petitions which had been presented against the Slave Trade.

This order having been read, he moved that the report of the committee of privy council, that the acts passed in the islands relative to slaves, that the evidence adduced last year on the Slave Trade, that the petitions offered in the last session against the Slave Trade, and that the accounts presented to the house in the last and present session relative to the exports and imports of Africa, be referred to the same committee.

These motions having been severally agreed to, the House immediately resolved itself into a committee of the whole house, and Sir William Dolben was put into the chair.

Mr. Wilberforce began by declaring, that when he considered how much discussion the subject, which he was about to explain to the committee, had occasioned, not only in that House, but throughout the kingdom, and throughout Europe; and when he considered the extent and importance of it, the variety of interests involved in it, and the consequences which might arise, he owned he had been filled with apprehensions, lest a subject of

such magnitude, and a cause of such weight, should suffer from the weakness of its advocate; but when he recollected that, in the progress of his inquiries, he had everywhere been received with candour, that most people gave him credit for the purity of his motives, and that, however many of these might then differ from him, they were all likely to agree in the end, he had dismissed his fears, and marched forward with a firmer step in this cause of humanity, justice, and religion. He could not, however, but lament that the subject had excited so much warmth. He feared that too many on this account were but ill prepared to consider it with impartiality. He entreated all such to endeavour to be calm and composed. A fair and cool discussion was essentially necessary. The motion he meant to offer, was as reconcilable to political expediency as to national humanity. It belonged to no party question. It would in the end be found serviceable to all parties, and to the best interests of the country. He did not come forward to accuse the West India planter, or the Liverpool merchant, or indeed any one concerned in this traffic; but, if blame attached anywhere, to take shame to himself in common, indeed, with the whole parliament of Great Britain, who, having suffered it to be carried on under their own authority, were all of them participators in the guilt.

In endeavouring to explain the great business of the day, he said he should call the attention of the House only to the leading features of the Slave Trade. Nor should he dwell long upon these. Every one might imagine for himself what must be the natural consequence of such a commerce with Africa. Was it not plain that she must suffer from it? that her savage manners must be rendered still more ferocious? and that a trade of this nature, carried on round her coasts, must extend violence and desolation to her very centre? It was well known that the natives of Africa were sold as goods, and that numbers of them were continually conveyed away from their country by the owners of British vessels. The question then was, which way the latter came by them. In answer to this question, the privy council report, which was then on the table, afforded evidence the most satisfactory and conclusive. He had found things in it, which

had confirmed every proposition he had maintained before, whether this proposition had been gathered from living information of the best authority, or from the histories he had read. But it was unnecessary either to quote the report, or to appeal to history on this occasion. Plain reason and common sense would point out how the poor Africans were obtained. Africa was a country divided into many kingdoms, which had different governments and laws. In many parts the princes were despotic. In others they had a limited rule. But in all of them, whatever the nature of the government was, men were considered as goods and property, and, as such, subject to plunder in the same manner as property in other countries. The persons in power there were naturally fond of our commodities; and to obtain them, (which could only be done by the sale of their countrymen,) they waged war on one another, or even ravaged their own country, when they could find no pretence for quarrelling with their neighbours: in their courts of law many poor wretches, who were innocent, were condemned; and to obtain these commodities in greater abundance, thousands were kidnapped and torn from their families, and sent into slavery. Such transactions, he said, were recorded in every history of Africa, and the report on the table confirmed them. With respect, however, to these he should make but one or two observations. If we looked into the reign of Henry the Eighth, we should find a parallel for one of them. We should find that similar convictions took place; and that penalties followed conviction. With respect to wars, the kings of Africa were never induced to engage in them by public principles, by national glory, and least of all by the love of their people. This had been stated by those most conversant in the subject, by Dr. Spaarman and Mr. Wadstrom. They had conversed with these princes, and had learned from their own mouths that to procure slaves was the object of their hostilities. Indeed, there was scarcely a single person examined before the privy council who did not prove that the Slave Trade was the source of the tragedies acted upon that extensive continent. Some had endeavoured to palliate this circumstance; but there was not one who did not more or less admit it to be true. By one the Slave

Trade was called the concurrent cause, by the majority it was acknowledged to be the principal motive, of the African wars. The same might be said with respect to those instances of treachery and injustice, in which individuals were concerned. And here he was sorry to observe that our own countrymen were often guilty. He would only at present advert to the tragedy at Calabàr, where two large African villages, having been for some time at war, made peace. This peace was to have been ratified by intermarriages; but some of our captains, who were there, seeing their trade would be stopped for a while, sowed dissension again between them. They actually set one village against the other, took a share in the contest, massacred many of the inhabitants, and carried others of them away as slaves. But shocking as this transaction might appear, there was not a single history of Africa to be read, in which scenes of as atrocious a nature were not related. They, he said, who defended this trade, were warped and blinded by their own interests, and would not be convinced of the miseries they were daily heaping on their fellow creatures. By the countenance they gave it, they had reduced the inhabitants of Africa to a worse state than that of the most barbarous nation. They had destroyed what ought to have been the bond of union and safety among them; they had introduced discord and anarchy among them; they had set kings against their subjects, and subjects against each other; they had rendered every private family wretched; they had, in short, given birth to scenes of injustice and misery not to be found in any other quarter of the globe.

Having said thus much on the subject of procuring slaves in Africa, he would now go to that of the transportation of them. And here he had fondly hoped, that when men with affections and feelings like our own had been torn from their country, and everything dear to them, he should have found some mitigation of their sufferings; but the sad reverse was the case. This was the most wretched part of the whole subject. He was incapable of impressing the House with what he felt upon it. A description of their conveyance was impossible. So much misery condensed in so little room was more than the human imagination had ever

before conceived. Think only of six hundred persons linked together, trying to get rid of each other, crammed in a close vessel with every object that was nauseous and disgusting, diseased, and struggling with all the varieties of wretchedness. It seemed impossible to add anything more to human misery. Yet shocking as this description must be felt to be by every man, the transportation had been described by several witnesses from Liverpool to be a comfortable conveyance. Mr. Norris had painted the accommodations on board a slave-ship in the most glowing colours. He had represented them in a manner which would have exceeded his attempts at praise of the most luxurious scenes. Their apartments, he said, were fitted up as advantageously for them as circumstances could possibly admit: they had several meals a day; some of their own country provisions, with the best sauces of African cookery; and, by way of variety, another meal of pulse, according to the European taste. After breakfast they had water to wash themselves, while their apartments were perfumed with frankincense and lime-juice. Before dinner they were amused after the manner of their country; instruments of music were introduced; the song and the dance were promoted; games of chance were furnished them; the men played and sang, while the women and girls made fanciful ornaments from beads, with which they were plentifully supplied. They were indulged in all their little fancies, and kept in sprightly humour. Another of them had said, when the sailors were flogged, it was out of the hearing of the Africans, lest it should depress their spirits. He by no means wished to say that such descriptions were wilful misrepresentations. If they were not, it proved that interest or prejudice was capable of spreading a film over the eyes thick enough to occasion total blindness.

Others, however, and these men of the greatest veracity, had given a different account. What would the house think, when by the concurring testimony of these the true history was laid open? The slaves who had been described as rejoicing in their captivity, were so wrung with misery at leaving their country, that it was the constant practice to set sail in the night, lest they should know the moment of their departure. With respect to

their accommodation, the right ancle of one was fastened to the left ancle of another by an iron fetter; and if they were turbulent, by another on the wrists. Instead of the apartments described, they were placed in niches, and along the decks, in such a manner, that it was impossible for any one to pass among them, however careful he might be, without treading upon them. Sir George Yonge had testified, that in a slave-ship, on board of which he went, and which had not completed her cargo by two hundred and fifty, instead of the scent of frankincense being perceptible to the nostrils, the stench was intolerable. The allowance of water was so deficient, that the slaves were frequently found gasping for life, and almost suffocated. The pulse with which they had been said to be favoured, were absolutely English horse-beans. The legislature of Jamaica had stated the scantiness both of water and provisions, as a subject which called for the interference of parliament. As Mr. Norris had said, the song and the dance were promoted, he could not pass over these expressions without telling the house what they meant. It would have been much more fair if he himself had explained the word *promoted*. The truth was, that, for the sake of exercise, these miserable wretches, loaded with chains and oppressed with disease, were forced to dance by the terror of the lash, and sometimes by the actual use of it. "I," said one of the evidences, "was employed to dance the men, while another person danced the women." Such then was the meaning of the word *promoted;* and it might also be observed with respect to food, that instruments were sometimes carried out in order to force them to eat; which was the same sort of proof, how much they enjoyed themselves in this instance also. With respect to their singing, it consisted of songs of lamentation for the loss of their country. While they sung they were in tears: so that one of the captains, more humane probably than the rest, threatened a woman with a flogging because the mournfulness of her song was too painful for his feelings. Perhaps he could not give a better proof of the sufferings of these injured people during their passage, than by stating the mortality which accompanied it. This was a species of evidence which was infallible on this occasion. Death was a

witness which could not deceive them; and the proportion of deaths would not only confirm, but, if possible, even aggravate our suspicion of the misery of the transit. It would be found, upon an average of all the ships, upon which evidence had been given, that, exclusively of such as perished before they sailed from Africa, not less than twelve and-a-half per cent. died on their passage: besides these, the Jamaica report stated that four and-a-half per cent. died while in the harbours, or on shore before the day of sale, which was only about the space of twelve or fourteen days after their arrival there; and one-third more died in the seasoning: and this in a climate exactly similar to their own, and where, as some of the witnesses pretended, they were healthy and happy. Thus out of every lot of one hundred shipped from Africa, seventeen died in about nine weeks, and not more than fifty lived to become effective labourers in our islands.

Having advanced thus far in his investigation, he felt, he said, the wickedness of the Slave Trade to be so enormous, so dreadful, and irremediable, that he could stop at no alternative short of its abolition. A trade founded on iniquity, and carried on with such circumstances of horror, must be abolished, let the policy of it be what it might; and he had from this time determined, whatever were the consequences, that he would never rest till he had effected that abolition. His mind had, indeed, been harassed by the objections of the West India planters, who had asserted, that the ruin of their property must be the consequence of such a measure. He could not help, however, distrusting their arguments. He could not believe that the Almighty Being, who had forbidden the practice of rapine and bloodshed, had made rapine and bloodshed necessary to any part of his universe. He felt a confidence in this persuasion, and took the resolution to act upon it. Light, indeed, soon broke in upon him. The suspicion of his mind was every day confirmed by increasing information, and the evidence he had now to offer upon this point was decisive and complete. The principle upon which he founded the necessity of the abolition was not policy, but justice: but though justice were the principle of the measure, yet he trusted he should

distinctly prove it to be reconcilable with our truest political interest.

In the first place, he asserted that the number of the slaves in our West India islands might be kept up without the introduction of recruits from Africa; and to prove this, he would enumerate the different sources of their mortality. The first was the disproportion of the sexes, there being, upon an average, about five males imported to three females: but this evil, when the Slave Trade was abolished, would cure itself. The second consisted in the bad condition in which they were brought to the islands, and the methods of preparing them for sale. They arrived frequently in a sickly and disordered state, and then they were made up for the market by the application of astringents, washes, mercurial ointments, and repelling drugs, so that their wounds and diseases might be hid. These artifices were not only fraudulent but fatal; but these, it was obvious, would of themselves fall with the trade. A third was, excessive labour joined with improper food; and a fourth was, the extreme dissoluteness of their manners. These, also, would both of them be counteracted by the impossibility of getting further supplies: for owners, now unable to replace those slaves whom they might lose, by speedy purchases in the markets, would be more careful how they treated them in future, and a better treatment would be productive of better morals. And here he would just advert to an argument used against those who complained of cruelty in our islands, which was, that it was the interest of masters to treat their slaves with humanity: but surely it was immediate and present, not future and distant interest, which was the great spring of action in the affairs of mankind. Why did we make laws to punish men? It was their interest to be upright and virtuous: but there was a present impulse continually breaking in upon their better judgment, and an impulse, which was known to be contrary to their permanent advantage. It was ridiculous to say that men would be bound by their interest, when gain or ardent passion urged them. It might as well be asserted, that a stone could not be thrown into the air, or a body move from place to place, because the principle of gravitation bound them to the surface of the earth. If a planter in

the West Indies found himself reduced in his profits, he did not usually dispose of any part of his slaves; and his own gratifications were never given up, so long as there was a possibility of making any retrenchment in the allowance of his slaves.—But to return to the subject which he had left: he was happy to state, that as all the causes of the decrease which he had stated might be remedied, so, by the progress of light and reformation, these remedies had been gradually coming into practice; and that, as these had increased, the decrease of slaves had in an equal proportion been lessened. By the gradual adoption of these remedies, he could prove from the report on the table, that the decrease of slaves in Jamaica had lessened to such a degree, that from the year 1774 to the present it was not quite one in a hundred, and that, in fact, they were at present in a state of increase; for that the births in that island, at this moment, exceeded the deaths by one thousand or eleven hundred per annum. Barbados, Nevis, Antigua, and the Bermudas, were, like Jamaica, lessening their decrease, and holding forth an evident and reasonable expectation of a speedy state of increase by natural population. But allowing the number of Negroes even to decrease for a time, there were methods which would insure the welfare of the West India islands. The lands there might be cultivated by fewer hands, and this to greater advantage to the proprietors and to this country, by the produce of cinnamon, coffee, and cotton, than by that of sugar. The produce of the plantations might also be considerably increased, even in the case of sugar, with less hands than were at present employed, if the owners of them would but introduce machines of husbandry. Mr. Long himself, long resident as a planter, had proved, upon his own estate, that the plough, though so little used in the West Indies, did the service of a hundred slaves, and caused the same ground to produce three hogsheads of sugar, which, when cultivated by slaves, would only produce two. The division of work, which, in free and civilized countries, was the grand source of wealth, and the reduction of the number of domestic servants, of whom not less than from twenty to forty were kept in ordinary families, afforded other resources for this purpose. But, granting that all these supposi-

tions should be unfounded, and that every one of these substitutes should fail for a time, the planters would be indemnified, as is the case in all transactions of commerce, by the increased price of their produce in the British market. Thus, by contending against the abolition, they were defeated in every part of the argument. But he would never give up the point, that the number of the slaves could be kept up by natural population, and without any dependence whatever on the Slave Trade. He therefore called upon the house again to abolish it as a criminal waste of life—it was utterly unnecessary—he had proved it so by documents contained in the report. The merchants of Liverpool, indeed, had thought otherwise, but he should be cautious how he assented to their opinions. They declared last year that it was a losing trade at two slaves to a ton, and yet they pursued it when restricted to five slaves to three tons. He believed, however, that it was upon the whole a losing concern; in the same manner as the lottery would be a losing adventure to any company who should buy all the tickets. Here and there an individual gained a large prize, but the majority of adventurers gained nothing. The same merchants, too, had asserted, that the town of Liverpool would be ruined by the abolition. But Liverpool did not depend for its consequence upon the Slave Trade. The whole export-tonnage from that place amounted to no less than 170,000 tons; whereas the export part of it to Africa amounted only to 13,000. Liverpool, he was sure, owed its greatness to other and very different causes; the Slave Trade bearing but a small proportion to its other trade.

Having gone through that part of the subject which related to the slaves, he would now answer two objections which he had frequently heard started. The first of these was, that the abolition of the Slave Trade would operate to the total ruin of our navy, and to the increase of that of our rivals. For an answer to these assertions, he referred to what he considered to be the most valuable part of the report, and for which the House and the country were indebted to the indefatigable exertions of Mr. Clarkson. By the report it appeared, that, instead of the Slave Trade being a nursery for British seamen, it was their grave. It appeared

that more seamen died in that trade in one year than in the whole remaining trade of the country in two. Out of 910 sailors in it, 216 died in the year, while upon a fair average of the same number of men employed in the trades to the East and West Indies, Petersburgh, Newfoundland, and Greenland, no more than eighty-seven died. It appeared also, that out of 3170, who had left Liverpool in the slave-ships in the year 1787, only 1428 had returned. And here, while he lamented the loss which the country thus annually sustained in her seamen, he had additionally to lament the barbarous usage which they experienced, and which this trade, by its natural tendency to harden the heart, exclusively produced. He would just read an extract of a letter from Governor Parrey, of Barbados, to Lord Sydney, one of the secretaries of state. The Governor declared he could no longer contain himself on account of the ill treatment, which the British sailors endured at the hands of their savage captains. These were obliged to have their vessels strongly manned, not only on account of the unhealthiness of the climate of Africa, but of the necessity of guarding the slaves, and preventing and suppressing insurrections; and when they arrived in the West Indies, and were out of all danger from the latter, they quarrelled with their men on the most frivolous pretences, on purpose to discharge them, and thus save the payment of supernumerary wages home. Thus many were left in a diseased and deplorable state; either to perish by sickness, or to enter into foreign service; great numbers of whom were for ever lost to their country. The Governor concluded by declaring, that the enormities attendant on this trade were so great, as to demand the immediate interference of the legislature.

The next objection to the abolition was, that if we were to relinquish the Slave Trade, our rivals, the French, would take it up; so that, while we should suffer by the measure, the evil would still go on, and this even to its former extent. This was, indeed, a very weak argument; and, if it would defend the continuance of the Slave Trade, might equally be urged in favour of robbery, murder, and every species of wickedness, which, if we did not practise, others would commit. But suppose, for the sake

of argument, that they were to take it up, what good would it do them? What advantages, for instance, would they derive from this pestilential commerce to their marine? Should not we, on the other hand, be benefited by this change? Would they not be obliged to come to us, in consequence of the cheapness of our manufactures, for what they wanted for the African market? But he would not calumniate the French nation so much as to suppose that they would carry on the trade, if we were to relinquish it. He believed, on the other hand, that they would abolish it also. Mr. Necker, the minister of France, was a man of religious principle; and, in his work upon the administration of the finances, had recorded his abhorrence of this trade. He was happy also to relate an anecdote of the king of France, which proved that he was a friend to the abolition; for, being petitioned to dissolve a society, formed at Paris, for the annihilation of the Slave Trade, his majesty answered, that he would not, and was happy to hear that so humane an association was formed in his dominions. And here, having mentioned the society in Paris, he could not help paying a due compliment to that established in London for the same purpose, which had laboured with the greatest assiduity to make this important subject understood, and which had conducted itself with so much judgment and moderation as to have interested men of all religions, and to have united them in their cause.

There was another topic which he would submit to the notice of the House, before he concluded. They were perhaps not aware that a fair and honourable trade might be substituted in the natural productions of Africa, so that our connexion with that continent in the way of commercial advantage need not be lost. The natives had already made some advances in it; and if they had not appeared so forward in raising and collecting their own produce for sale as in some other countries, it was to be imputed to the Slave Trade: but remove the cause, and Africa would soon emerge from her present ignorant and indolent state. Civilization would go on with her as well as with other nations. Europe, three or four centuries ago, was in many parts as barbarous as Africa at present, and chargeable with as bad practices.

For what would be said, if, so late as the middle of the thirteenth century, he could find a parallel there for the Slave Trade? —Yes. This parallel was to be found even in England. The people of Bristol, in the reign of Henry the Seventh, had a regular market for children, which were bought by the Irish: but the latter having experienced a general calamity, which they imputed as a judgment from Heaven on account of this wicked traffic, abolished it. The only thing, therefore, which he had to solicit of the House, was to show that they were now as enlightened as the Irish were four centuries back, by refusing to buy the children of other nations. He hoped they would do it. He hoped, too, they would do it in an unqualified manner. Nothing less than a total abolition of the trade would do away the evils complained of. The legislature of Jamaica, indeed, had thought that regulations might answer the purpose. Their report had recommended, that no person should be kidnapped, or permitted to be made a slave, contrary to the customs of Africa. But might he not be reduced to this state very unjustly, and yet by no means contrary to the African laws? Besides, how could we distinguish between those who were justly or unjustly reduced to it? Could we discover them by their physiognomy?—But if we could, who would believe that the British captains would be influenced by any regulations made in this country, to refuse to purchase those who had not been fairly, honestly, and uprightly enslaved? They who were offered to us for sale, were brought, some of them, three or four thousand miles, and exchanged like cattle from one hand to another, till they reached the coast. But who could return these to their homes, or make them compensation for their sufferings during their long journeyings? He would now conclude by begging pardon of the House for having detained them so long. He could indeed have expressed his own conviction in fewer words. He needed only to have made one or two short statements, and to have quoted the commandment, "Thou shalt do no murder." But he thought it his duty to lay the whole of the case, and the whole of its guilt, before them. They would see now that no mitigations, no palliatives, would either be efficient or admissible. Nothing short

of an absolute abolition could be adopted. This they owed to Africa: they owed it, too, to their own moral characters. And he hoped they would follow up the principle of one of the repentant African captains, who had gone before the committee of privy council as a voluntary witness, and that they would make Africa all the atonement in their power for the multifarious injuries she had received at the hands of British subjects. With respect to these injuries, their enormity and extent, it might be alleged in their excuse, that they were not fully acquainted with them till that moment, and therefore not answerable for their former existence: but now they could no longer plead ignorance concerning them. They had seen them brought directly before their eyes, and they must decide for themselves, and must justify to the world and their own consciences the facts and principles upon which their decision was formed.

Mr. Wilberforce having concluded his speech, which lasted three hours and a half, read, and laid on the table of the House, as subjects for their future discussion, twelve propositions which he had deduced from the evidence contained in the privy council report, and of which the following is the abridged substance:—

1. That the number of slaves annually carried from the coast of Africa, in British vessels, was about 38,000, of which, on an average, 22,500 were carried to the British islands, and that of the latter only 17,500 were retained there.

2. That these slaves, according to the evidence on the table, consisted, first, of prisoners of war; secondly, of free persons sold for debt, or on account of real or imputed crimes, particularly adultery and witchcraft; in which cases they were frequently sold with their whole families, and sometimes for the profit of those by whom they were condemned; thirdly, of domestic slaves sold for the profit of their masters, in some places at the will of the masters, and in others, on being condemned by them for real or imputed crimes; fourthly, of persons made slaves by various acts of oppression, violence, or fraud, committed either by the princes and chiefs of those countries on their subjects, or by private individuals on each other; or, lastly, by Europeans engaged in this traffic.

3. That the trade so carried on, had necessarily a tendency to occasion frequent and cruel wars among the natives; to produce unjust convictions and punishments for pretended or aggravated crimes; to encourage acts of oppression, violence, and fraud, and to obstruct the natural course of civilization and improvement in those countries.

4. That Africa in its present state furnished several valuable articles of commerce, which were partly peculiar to itself, but that it was adapted to the production of others, with which we were now either wholly or in great part supplied by foreign nations. That an extensive commerce with Africa might be substituted in these commodities, so as to afford a return for as many articles as had annually been carried thither in British vessels: and, lastly, that such a commerce might reasonably be expected to increase, by the progress of civilization there.

5. That the Slave Trade was peculiarly destructive to the seamen employed in it; and that the mortality there had been much greater than in any British vessels employed upon the same coast in any other service or trade.

6. That the mode of transporting the slaves from Africa to the West Indies necessarily exposed them to many and grievous sufferings, for which no regulations could provide an adequate remedy; and that in consequence thereof a large proportion had annually perished during the voyage.

7. That a large proportion had also perished in the harbours in the West Indies, from the diseases contracted in the voyage, and the treatment of the same, previously to their being sold; and that this loss amounted to four and a-half per cent. of the imported slaves.

8. That the loss of the newly-imported slaves, within the three first years after their importation, bore a large proportion to the whole number imported.

9. That the natural increase of population among the slaves in the islands appeared to have been impeded principally by the following causes:—First, by the inequality of the sexes in the importations from Africa. Secondly, by the general dissoluteness of manners among the slaves, and the want of proper regulations

for the encouragement of marriages, and of rearing children among them. Thirdly, by the particular diseases which were prevalent among them, and which were, in some instances, to be attributed to too severe labour, or rigorous treatment; and in others to insufficient or improper food. Fourthly, by those diseases, which affected a large proportion of negro-children in their infancy, and by those to which the negroes, newly imported from Africa, had been found to be particularly liable.

10. That the whole number of the slaves in the island of Jamaica, in 1768, was about 167,000, in 1774, about 193,000, and in 1787, about 256,000: that by comparing these numbers with the numbers imported and retained in the said island during all these years, and making proper allowances, the annual excess of deaths above births was in the proportion of about seven-eighths per cent.; that in the first six years of this period it was in the proportion of rather more than one on every hundred; that in the last thirteen years of the same it was in the proportion of about three-fifths on every hundred; and that a number of slaves, amounting to fifteen thousand, perished during the latter period, in consequence of repeated hurricanes, and of the want of foreign supplies of provisions.

11. That the whole number of slaves in the island of Barbados was, in the year 1764, about 70,706; in 1774, about 74,874; in 1780, about 68,270; in 1781, after the hurricane, about 63,248, and in 1786, about 62,115; that, by comparing these numbers with the number imported into this island, (not allowing for any re-exportation,) the annual excess of deaths above births in the ten years, from 1764 to 1774, was in the proportion of about five on every hundred; that in the seven years, from 1774 to 1780, it was in the proportion of about one and one-third on every hundred; that between the years 1780 and 1781 there had been a decrease in the number of slaves of about 5000; that in the six years, from 1781 to 1786, the excess of deaths was in the proportion of rather less than seven-eighths on every hundred; that in the four years, from 1783 to 1786, it was in the proportion of rather less than one-third on every

hundred; and that during the whole period, there was no doubt that some had been exported from the island, but considerably more in the first part of this period than in the last.

12. That the accounts from the Leeward Islands, and from Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent's, did not furnish sufficient grounds for comparing the state of population in the said islands, at different periods, with the number of slaves, which had been from time to time imported there, and exported therefrom; but that from the evidence which had been received, respecting the present state of these islands, as well as that of Jamaica and Barbados, and from a consideration of the means of obviating the causes, which had hitherto operated to impede the natural increase of the slaves, and of lessening the demand for manual labour, without diminishing the profit of the planters, no considerable or permanent inconvenience would result from discontinuing the further importation of African slaves.

These propositions having been laid upon the table of the House, Lord Penrhyn rose in behalf of the planters; and next, after him, Mr. Gascoyne, (both members for Liverpool,) in behalf of the merchants concerned in the latter place. They both predicted the ruin and misery which would inevitably follow the abolition of the trade. The former said, that no less than seventy millions were mortgaged upon lands in the West Indies, all of which would be lost. Mr. Wilberforce, therefore, should have made a motion to pledge the House to the repayment of this sum, before he had brought forward his propositions. Compensation ought to have been agreed upon as a previous necessary measure. The latter said, that in consequence of the bill of last year, many ships were laid up, and many seamen out of employ. His constituents had large capitals engaged in the trade, and, if it were to be wholly done away, they would suffer from not knowing where to employ them: they both joined in asserting, that Mr. Wilberforce had made so many misrepresentations in all the branches of this subject, that no reliance whatever was to be placed on the picture, which he had chosen to exhibit. They should speak, however, more fully to this point when the propositions were discussed.

The latter declaration called up Mr. Wilberforce again, who observed that he had no intention of misrepresenting any fact: he did not know that he had done it in any one instance; but, if he had, it would be easy to convict him out of the report upon the table.

Mr. Burke then rose. He would not, he said, detain the committee long: indeed, he was not able, weary and indisposed as he then felt himself, even if he had an inclination to do it; but as on account of his other parliamentary duty, he might not have it in his power to attend the business now before them in its course, he would take that opportunity of stating his opinion upon it.

And, first, the House, the nation, and all Europe were under great obligations to Mr. Wilberforce for having brought this important subject forward. He had done it in a manner the most masterly, impressive, and eloquent. He had laid down his principles so admirably, and with so much order and force, that his speech had equalled anything he had ever heard in modern oratory, and perhaps it had not been excelled by anything to be found in ancient times. As to the Slave Trade itself, there could not be two opinions about it, where men were not interested. A trade begun in savage war, prosecuted with unheard-of barbarity, continued during the transportation with the most loathsome imprisonment, and ending in perpetual exile and slavery, was a trade so horrid in all in circumstances, that it was impossible to produce a single argument in its favour. On the ground of prudence, nothing could be said in defence of it, nor could it be justified by necessity. It was necessity alone that could be brought to justify inhumanity; but no case of necessity could be made out strong enough to justify this monstrous traffic. It was therefore the duty of the House to put an end to it, and this without further delay. This conviction, that it became them to do it immediately, made him regret (and it was the only thing he regretted in the admirable speech he had heard) that his honourable friend should have introduced propositions on this subject. He could have wished that the business had been brought to a conclusion at once, without voting the propositions

which had been read to them. He was not over fond of abstract propositions; they were seldom necessary, and often occasioned great difficulty, embarrassment, and delay. There was, besides, no occasion whatever to assign detailed reasons for a vote, which nature herself dictated, and which religion enforced. If it should happen that the propositions were not carried in that House or the other, such a complication of mischiefs might follow, as might occasion them heartily to lament that they were ever introduced. If the ultimate resolution should happen to be lost, he was afraid the propositions would pass as waste paper, if not be injurious to the cause at a future time.

And now, as the House must bring this matter to an issue, he would beg their attention to a particular point. He entreated them to look further than the present moment, and to ask themselves if they had fortified their minds sufficiently to bear the consequences which might arise from the abolition of the Slave Trade, supposing they should decide upon it. When they abandoned it, other foreign powers might take it up, and clandestinely supply our islands with slaves. Had they virtue enough to see another country reaping profits, which they themselves had given up; and to abstain from that envy natural to rivals, and firmly to adhere to their determination? If so, let them thankfully proceed to vote the immediate abolition of the Slave Trade. But if they should repent of their virtue, (and he had known miserable instances of such repentance,) all hopes of future reformation of this enormous evil would be lost. They would go back to a trade they had abandoned with redoubled attachment, and would adhere to it with a degree of avidity and shameless ardour, to their own humiliation, and to the degradation and disgrace of the nation in the eyes of all Europe. These were considerations worth regarding, before they took a decisive step in a business, in which they ought not to move with any other determination than to abide by the consequences at all hazards. The honourable gentleman (who to his eternal honour had introduced this great subject to their notice) had, in his eloquent oration, knocked at every door, and appealed to every passion, well knowing that mankind were governed by their sympathies. But there were other passions to

be regarded; men were always ready to obey their sympathies when it cost them nothing; but were they prepared to pay the price of their virtue on this great occasion? This was the question. If they were, they would do themselves immortal honour, and would have the satisfaction of having done away a commerce, which, while it was productive of misery not to be described, most of all hardened the heart and vitiated the human character.

With respect to the consequences mentioned by the two members for Liverpool, he had a word or two to offer upon them. Lord Penrhyn had talked of millions to be lost and paid for; but seeing no probability of any loss ultimately, he could see no necessity for compensation. He believed on the other hand, that the planters would be great gainers by those wholesome regulations, which they would be obliged to make, if the Slave Trade were abolished. He did not however flatter them with the idea that this gain would be immediate. Perhaps they might experience inconveniences at first, and even some loss. But what then? With their loss, their virtue would be the greater. And in this light he hoped the House would consider the matter; for, if they were called upon to do an act of virtuous energy and heroism, they ought to think it right to submit to temporary disadvantages for the sake of truth, justice, humanity, and the prospect of greater happiness.

The other member, Mr. Gascoyne, had said that his constituents, if the trade were abolished, could not employ their capitals elsewhere. But whether they could or not, it was the duty of that House, if they put them into a traffic which was shocking to humanity and disgraceful to the nation, to change their application, and not to allow them to be used to a barbarous purpose. He believed, however, that the merchants of Liverpool would find no difficulty on this head. All capitals required active motion; it was in their nature not to remain passive and unemployed; they would soon turn them into other channels. This they had done themselves during the American war; for the Slave Trade was almost wholly lost, and yet they had their ships employed, either as transports in the service of government or in other ways.

And as he now called upon the House not to allow any conjectural losses to become impediments in the way of the abolition of the Slave Trade, so he called upon them to beware how they suffered any representations of the happiness of the state of slavery in our islands to influence them against so glorious a measure. Admiral Barrington had said in his testimony, that he had often envied the condition of the slaves there. But surely, the honourable admiral must have meant, that, as he had often toiled like a slave in the defence of his country, (as his many gallant actions had proved,) so he envied the day when he was to toil in a similar manner in the same cause. If, however, his words were to be taken literally, his sensations could only be accounted for by his having seen the negroes in the hour of their sports, when a sense of the misery of their condition was neither felt by themselves nor visible to others. But their appearance on such occasions did by no means disprove their low and abject state. Nothing made a happy slave but a degraded man. In proportion as the mind grows callous to its degradation, and all sense of manly pride is lost, the slave feels comfort. In fact, he is no longer a man. If he were to define a man, he would say with Shakspeare,

> Man is a being holding large discourse,
> Looking before and after.

But a slave was incapable of looking before and after; he had no motive to do it; he was a mere passive instrument in the hands of others to be used at their discretion. Though living, he was dead as to all voluntary agency; though moving amidst the creation with an erect form, and with the shape and semblance of a human being, he was a nullity as a man.

Mr. Pitt thanked his honourable friend Mr. Wilberforce for having at length introduced this great and important subject to the consideration of the House. He thanked him also for the perspicuous, forcible, and masterly manner in which he had treated it. He was sure that no argument compatible with any idea of justice could be assigned for the continuation of the Slave Trade. And at the same time that he was willing to

listen with candour and attention to everything that could be urged on the other side of the question, he was sure that the principles, from which his opinion was deduced, were unalterable. He had examined the subject with the anxiety which became him, where the happiness and interests of so many thousands were concerned, and with the minuteness which would be expected of him, on account of the responsible situation which he held; and he averred that it was sophistry, obscurity of ideas, and vagueness of reasoning, which alone could have hitherto prevented all mankind (those immediately interested in the question excepted) from agreeing in one and the same opinion upon the subject. With respect to the propriety of introducing the individual propositions which had been offered, he differed with Mr. Burke, and he thanked his honourable friend Mr. Wilberforce for having chosen the only way in which it could be made obvious to the world, that they were warranted on every ground of reason and of fact in coming to that vote, which he trusted would be the end of their proceeding. The grounds for the attainment of this end were distinctly stated in the propositions. Let the propositions be brought before the House, one by one, and argued from the evidence, and it would then be seen that they were such as no one, who was not deaf to the language of reason, could deny. Let them be once entered upon the journals of that House, and it was almost impossible they should fail. The abolition must be voted; as to the mode of it, or how it should be effected, they were not at present to discuss it; but he trusted it would be such as would not invite foreign powers to supply our islands with slaves by a clandestine trade. After a debt, founded on the immutable principles of justice, was found to be due, it was impossible but the country had means to cause it to be paid. Should such an illicit proceeding be attempted, the only language which it became us to adopt was, that Great Britain had resources to enable her to protect her islands, and to prevent that traffic from being clandestinely carried on by them, which she had thought fit from a regard to her character to abandon. It was highly becoming Great Britain to take the lead of other nations in such a virtuous and magnificent measure, and he could not but

have confidence that they would be inclined to share the honour with us, or be pleased to follow us as their example. If we were disposed to set about this glorious work in earnest, they might be invited to concur with us by a negotiation to be immediately opened for that purpose. He would only now observe, before he sat down, in answer to certain ideas thrown out, that he could by no means acquiesce in any compensation for losses which might be sustained by the people of Liverpool or by others in any other part of the kingdom, in the execution of this just and necessary undertaking.

Sir William Yonge said, he wanted no inducement to concur with the honourable mover of the propositions, provided the latter could be fairly established, and no serious mischiefs were to arise from the abolition. But he was apprehensive that many evils might follow in the case of any sudden or unlooked-for decrease in the slaves. They might be destroyed by hurricanes. They might be swept off by many fatal disorders. In these cases, the owners of them would not be able to fill up their places, and they who had lent money upon the lands, where the losses had happened, would foreclose their mortgages. He was fearful, also, that a clandestine trade would be carried on, and then the sufferings of the Africans, crammed up in small vessels, which would be obliged to be hovering about from day to day, to watch an opportunity of landing, would be ten times greater than any which they now experienced in the legal trade. He was glad, however, as the matter was to be discussed, that it had been brought forward in the shape of distinct propositions, to be grounded upon the evidence in the privy council report.

Mr. Fox observed that he did not like, where he agreed as to the substance of a measure, to differ with respect to the form of it. If, however, he differed in any thing in the present case, it was with a view rather to forward the business than to injure it, or to throw anything like an obstacle in its way. Nothing like either should come from him. What he thought was, that all the propositions were not necessary to be voted previously to the ultimate decision, though some of them undoubtedly were. He considered them as of two classes: the one, alleging the grounds

upon which it was proper to proceed to the abolition; such as that the trade was productive of inexpressible misery, in various ways, to the innocent natives of Africa; that it was the grave of our seamen, and so on; the other merely answering objections which might be started, and where there might be a difference of opinion. He was, however, glad that the propositions were likely to be entered upon the journals; since, if, from any misfortune, the business should be deferred, it might succeed another year. Sure he was that it could not fail to succeed sooner or later. He highly approved of what Mr. Pitt had said relative to the language it became us to hold out to foreign powers, in case of a clandestine trade. With respect, however, to the assertion of Sir William Yonge that a clandestine trade in slaves would be worse than a legal one, he could not admit it. Such a trade, if it existed at all, ought only to be clandestine. A trade in human flesh and sinews was so scandalous, that it ought not openly to be carried on by any government whatever, and much less by that of a Christian country. With regard to the regulation of the Slave Trade, he knew of no such thing as a regulation of robbery and murder. There was no medium. The legislature must either abolish it, or plead guilty of all the wickedness which had been shown to attend it. He would now say a word or two with respect to the conduct of foreign nations on this subject. It was possible that these, when they heard that the matter had been discussed in that House, might follow the example, or they might go before us and set one themselves. If this were to happen, though we might be the losers, humanity would be the gainer. He himself had been thought sometimes to use expressions relative to France, which were too harsh, and as if he could only treat her as the enemy of this country. Politically speaking, France was our rival. But he well knew the distinction between political enmity and illiberal prejudice. If there was any great and enlightened nation in Europe, it was France, which was as likely as any country upon the face of the globe to catch a spark from the light of our fire, and to act upon the present subject with warmth and enthusiasm. France had often been improperly stimulated by her ambition; and he had no

doubt but that, in the present instance, she would readily follow its honourable dictates.

Mr. (afterwards Lord) Grenville would not detain the house by going into a question which had been so ably argued; but he should not do justice to his feelings, if he did not express publicly to his honourable friend, Mr. Wilberforce, the pleasure he had received from one of the most masterly and eloquent speeches he had ever heard; a speech which, while it did honour to him, entitled him to the thanks of the House, of the people of England, of all Europe, and of the latest posterity. He approved of the propositions as the best mode of bringing this great question to a happy issue. He was pleased, also, with the language which had been held out with respect to foreign nations, and with our determination to assert our right of preventing our colonies from carrying on any trade which we had thought it our duty to abandon.

Aldermen Newnham, Sawbridge, and Watson, though they wished well to the cause of humanity, could not, as representatives of the city of London, give their concurrence to a measure which would injure it so essentially as the abolition of the Slave Trade. This trade might undoubtedly be put under wholesome regulations, and made productive of great commercial advantages; but, if it were abolished, it would render the city of London one scene of bankruptcy and ruin. It became the house to take care, while they were giving way to the goodness of their hearts, that they did not contribute to the ruin of the mercantile interests of their country.

Mr. Martin stated that he was so well satisfied with the speech of the honourable gentleman who had introduced the propositions, and with the language held out by other distinguished members on this subject, that he felt himself more proud than ever of being an Englishman. He hoped and believed that the melancholy predictions of the worthy aldermen would not prove true, and that the citizens of London would have too much public spirit to wish that a great national object (which comprehended the great duties of humanity and justice) should be set aside, merely out of consideration to their own private interests.

Mr. Dempster expected, notwithstanding all he had heard,

that the first proposition submitted to them would have been to make good out of the public purse all the losses individuals were liable to sustain from an abolition of the Slave Trade. This ought to have been, as Lord Penrhyn had observed, a preliminary measure. He did not like to be generous out of the pockets of others. They were to abolish the trade, it was said, out of a principle of humanity. Undoubtedly they owed humanity to all mankind; but they also owed justice to those who were interested in the event of the question, and had embarked their fortunes on the faith of parliament. In fact he did not like to see men introducing even their schemes of benevolence to the detriment of other people; and much less did he like to see them going to the colonies, as it were upon their estates, and prescribing rules to them for their management. With respect to his own speculative opinion, as it regarded cultivation, he had no objection to give it. He was sure that sugar could be raised cheaper by freemen than by slaves. This the practice in China abundantly proved; but yet neither he, nor any other person, had a right to force a system upon others. As to the trade itself, by which the present labourers were supplied, it had been considered by that House as so valuable that they had preferred it to all others, and had annually voted a considerable sum towards carrying it on. They had hitherto deemed it an essential nursery for our seamen. Had it really been such as had been represented, our ancestors would scarcely have encouraged it; and therefore, upon these and other considerations, he could not help thinking that they would be wanting in their duty if they abolished it altogether.

Mr. William Smith would not detain the House long at that late hour upon this important subject; but he could not help testifying the great satisfaction he felt at the manner, in which the honourable gentleman who opened the debate (if it could be so called) had treated it. He approved of the propositions as the best mode of bringing the decision to a happy issue. He gave Mr. Fox great credit for the open and manly way in which he had manifested his abhorrence of this trade, and for the support he meant to give to the total and unqualified abolition of it; for

he was satisfied, that the more it was inquired into, the more it would be found that nothing short of abolition would cure the evil. With respect to certain assertions of the members for Liverpool, and certain melancholy predictions about the consequences of such an event, which others had held out, he desired to lay in his claim for observation upon them when the great question should come before the House.

Soon after this the House broke up; and the discussion of the propositions, which was the next parliamentary measure intended, was postponed to a future day, which was sufficiently distant to give all the parties concerned, time to make the necessary preparations for it.

Of this interval the committee for the abolition availed themselves, to thank Mr. Wilberforce for the very able and satisfactory manner in which he had stated to the House his propositions for the abolition of the Slave Trade, and for the unparalleled assiduity and perseverance with which he had all along endeavoured to accomplish this object, as well as to take measures themselves for the further promotion of it. Their opponents availed themselves of this interval also. But that which now embarrassed them, was the evidence contained in the privy council report. They had no idea, considering the number of witnesses they had sent to be examined, that this evidence, when duly weighed, could by right reasoning have given birth to the sentiments which had been displayed in the speeches of the most distinguished members of the House of Commons, or to the contents of the propositions which had been laid upon their table. They were thunderstruck as it were by their own weakness; and from this time they were determined, if possible, to get rid of it as a standard for decision, or to interpose every parliamentary delay in their power.

On the 21st of May, the subject came again before the attention of the House. It was ushered in, as was expected, by petitions collected in the interim, and which were expressive of the frightful consequences which would attend the abolition of the Slave Trade. Alderman Newnham presented one from certain merchants in London; Alderman Watson another from certain merchants, mortgagees, and creditors of the sugar-islands; Lord

Maitland, another from the planters of Antigua; Mr. Blackburne, another from certain manufacturers of Manchester; Mr. Gascoyne, another from the corporation of Liverpool; and Lord Penrhyn, others from different interested bodies in the same town.

Mr. Wilberforce then moved the order of the day for the House to go into a committee of the whole house on the report of the privy council, and the several matters of evidence already upon the table relative to the Slave Trade.

Mr. Alderman Sawbridge immediately arose, and asked Mr. Wilberforce if he meant to adduce any other evidence, besides that in the privy council report, in behalf of his propositions, or to admit other witnesses, if such could be found, to invalidate them. Mr. Wilberforce replied, that he was quite satisfied with the report on the table. It would establish all his propositions. He should call no witnesses himself: as to permission to others to call them, that must be determined by the House.

This question and this answer gave birth immediately to great disputes upon the subject. Aldermen Sawbridge, Newnham, and Watson; Lords Penrhyn and Maitland; Messrs. Gascoyne, Marsham, and others, spoke against the admission of the evidence which had been laid upon the table. They contended that it was insufficient, defective, and contradictory; that it was *ex parte* evidence; that it had been manufactured by ministers; that it was founded chiefly on hearsay, and that the greatest part of it was false; that it had undergone no cross-examination; that it was unconstitutional; and that, if they admitted it, they would establish a dangerous precedent, and abandon their rights. It was urged on the other hand by Mr. Courtenay, that it could not be *ex parte* evidence, because it contained testimony on both sides of the question. The circumstance, also, of its being contradictory, which had been alleged against it, proved that it was the result of an impartial examination. Mr. Fox observed, that it was perfectly admissible. He called upon those, who took the other side of the question, to say why, if it was really inadmissible, they had not opposed it at first. It had now been a long time on the table, and no fault had been found with it. The

truth was, it did not suit them; and they were determined by a side-wind, as it were, to put an end to the inquiry. Mr. Pitt observed, that, if parliament had previously resolved to receive no evidence on a given subject but from the privy council, such a resolution, indeed, would strike at the root of the privileges of the House of Commons; but it was absurd to suppose that the House could upon no occasion receive evidence, taken where it was most convenient to take it, and subject throughout to new investigation, if any one doubted its validity. The report of the privy council consisted, first, of calculations and accounts from the public offices; and, next, of written documents on the subject: both of which were just as authentic as if they had been laid upon the table of that House. The remaining part of it consisted of the testimony of living witnesses, all of whose names were published; so that if any one doubted their veracity, it was open to him to re-examine all or each of them. It had been said by adversaries that the report on the table was a weak and imperfect report, but would not these have the advantage of its weakness and imperfection? It was strange, when his honourable friend, Mr. Wilberforce, had said, "Weak and imperfect as the report may be thought to be, I think it strong enough to bear me out in all my propositions," that they, who objected to it, should have no better reason to give than this, "We object, because the ground of evidence on which you rest is too weak to support your cause." Unless it were meant to say (and the meaning seemed to be but thinly disguised) that the House ought to abandon the inquiry, he saw no reason whatever for not going immediately into a committee; and he wished gentlemen to consider whether it became the dignity of their proceedings to obstruct the progress of an inquiry, which the House had pledged itself to undertake. Their conduct, indeed, seemed extraordinary on this occasion. It was certainly singular that, while the report had been five weeks upon the table, no argument had been brought against its sufficiency; but that on the moment when the House was expected to come to an ultimate vote upon the subject, it should be thought defective, contradictory, unconstitutional, and otherwise objectionable. These objections, he was satisfied,

neither did nor could originate with the country gentlemen; but they were brought forward, for purposes not now to be concealed, by the avowed enemies of this noble cause.

In the course of the discussion which arose upon this subject, every opportunity was taken to impress the House with the dreadful consequences of the abolition. Mr. Henniker read a long letter from the King of Dahomey to George the First, which had been found among the papers of James, first Duke of Chandos, and which had remained in the family till that time. In this, the King of Dahomey boasted of his victory over the King of Ardrah, and how he had ornamented the pavement and walls of his palace with the heads of the vanquished. These cruelties, Mr. Henniker said, were not imputable to the Slave Trade. They showed the Africans to be naturally a savage people, and that we did them a great kindness by taking them from their country. Alderman Sawbridge maintained that, if the abolition passed, the Africans who could not be sold as slaves would be butchered at home; while those who had been carried to our islands would be no longer under control. Hence insurrections, and the manifold evils which belonged to them. Alderman Newnham was certain that the abolition would be the ruin of the trade of the country. It would affect even the landed interest and the funds. It would be impossible to collect money to diminish the national debt. Every man in the kingdom would feel the abolition come home to him. Alderman Watson maintained the same argument, and pronounced the trade under discussion to be a merciful and humane trade.

Compensation was also insisted upon by Mr. Drake, Alderman Newnham, Mr. Henniker, Mr. Cruger, and others. This was resisted by Mr. Burke; who said, that compensation in such a case would be contrary to every principle of legislation. Government gave encouragement to any branch of commerce, while it was regarded as conducive to the welfare of the community, or compatible with humanity and justice. But they were competent to withdraw their countenance from it, when it was found to be immoral, and injurious, and disgraceful to the state. They who engaged in it knew the terms under which they were

placed, and adopted it with all the risks with which it was accompanied; and of consequence it was but just, that they should be prepared to abide by the loss which might accrue, when the public should think it right no longer to support it. But such a trade as this it was impossible any longer to support. Indeed it was not a trade. It was a system of robbery. It was a system, too, injurious to the welfare of other nations. How could Africa ever be civilized under it? While we continued to purchase the natives, they must remain in a state of barbarism. It was impossible to civilize slaves. It was contrary to the system of human nature. There was no country placed under such disadvantageous circumstances, into which the shadow of improvement had ever been introduced.

Great pains were taken to impress the house with the propriety of regulation. Sir Grey Cooper; Aldermen Sawbridge, Watson, and Newnham; Mr. Marsham, and Mr. Cruger, contended strenuously for it instead of abolition. It was also stated, that the merchants would consent to any regulation of the trade which might be offered to them.

In the course of the debate much warmth of temper was manifested on both sides. The expression of Mr. Fox in a former debate, "that the Slave Trade could not be regulated, because there could be no regulation of robbery and murder," was brought up, and construed by planters in the house as a charge of these crimes upon themselves. Mr. Fox, however, would not retract the expression. He repeated it. He had no notion, however, that any individual would have taken it to himself. If it contained any reflection at all, it was on the whole parliament, who had sanctioned such a trade. Mr. Molyneux rose up, and animadverted severely on the character of Mr. Ramsay, one of the evidences in the privy council report, during his residence in the West Indies. This called up Sir William Dolben and Sir Charles Middleton in his defence, the latter of whom bore honourable testimony to his virtues from an intimate acquaintance with him, and a residence in the same village with him, for twenty years. Mr. Molyneux spoke also in angry terms of the measure of abolition. To annihilate the trade, he said,

and to make no compensation on account of it, was an act of swindling. Mr. Macnamara called the measure hypocritical, fanatic, and methodistical. Mr. Pitt was so irritated at the insidious attempt to set aside the privy council report, when no complaint had been alleged against it before, that he was quite off his guard, and he thought it right afterwards to apologize for the warmth into which he had been betrayed. The Speaker, too, was obliged frequently to interfere. On this occasion no less than thirty members spoke. And there had probably been few seasons, when so much disorder had been discoverable in that house.

The result of the debate was, a permission to those interested in the continuance of the Slave Trade to bring counsel to the bar on the 26th of May, and then to introduce such witnesses, as might throw further light on the propositions in the shortest time: for Mr. Pitt only acquiesced in this new measure on a supposition, "that there would be no unnecessary delay, as he could by no means submit to the ultimate procrastination of so important a business." He even hoped (and in this hope he was joined by Mr. Fox) that those concerned would endeavour to bring the whole of the evidence they meant to offer at the first examination.

On the day appointed, the house met for the purposes now specified; when Alderman Newnham, thinking that such an important question should not be decided but in a full assembly of the representatives of the nation, moved for a call of the House on that day fortnight. Mr. Wilberforce stated that he had no objection to such a measure; believing the greater the number present the more favourable it would be to his cause. This motion, however, produced a debate and a division, in which it appeared that there were one hundred and fifty-eight in favour of it, and twenty-eight against it. The business of the day now commenced. The house went into a committee, and Sir William Dolben was put into the chair. Mr. Serjeant Le Blanc was then called in. He made an able speech in behalf of his clients; and introduced John Barnes, Esquire, as his first witness, whose examination took up the remainder of the day. By this step they who were interested in

the continuance of the trade, attained their wishes, for they had now got possession of the ground with their evidence; and they knew they could keep it, almost as long as they pleased, for the purposes of delay. Thus they, who boasted, when the privy council examinations began, that they would soon do away all the idle tales which had been invented against them, and who desired the public only to suspend their judgment till the report should come out, when they would see the folly and wickedness of all our allegations, dared not abide by the evidence which they themselves had taught others to look up to as the standard by which they were desirous of being judged: thus they, who had advantages beyond measure in forming a body of evidence in their own favour, abandoned that which they had collected. And here it is impossible for me not to make a short comparative statement on this subject, if it were only to show how little can be made out, with the very best opportunities, against the cause of humanity and religion. With respect to ourselves, we had almost all our witnesses to seek. We had to travel after them for weeks together. When we found them, we had scarcely the power of choice. We were obliged to take them as they came. When we found them, too, we had generally to implore them to come forward in our behalf. Of those so implored, three out of four refused, and the plea for this refusal was a fear lest they should injure their own interests. The merchants, on the other hand, had their witnesses ready on the spot. They had always ships in harbour, containing persons who had a knowledge of the subject. They had several also from whom to choose. If one man was favourable to their cause in three of the points belonging to it, but was unfavourable in the fourth, he could be put aside and replaced. When they had thus selected them, they had not to entreat, but to command their attendance. They had no fear, again, when they thus commanded, of a refusal on the ground of interest; because these were promoting their interest by obliging those who employed them. Viewing these and other circumstances, which might be thrown into this comparative statement, it was some consolation to us to know, amidst the disappointment which this new measure occasioned, and our

apparent defeat in the eyes of the public, that we had really beaten our opponents at their own weapons, and that, as this was a victory in our own private feelings, so it was the presage to us of a future triumph.

On the 29th of May, Mr. Tierney made a motion to divide the consideration of the Slave Trade into two heads, by separating the African from the West Indian part of the question. This he did for the more clear discussion of the propositions, as well as to save time. This motion, however, was overruled by Mr. Pitt.

At length, on the 9th of June, by which time it was supposed that new light, and this in sufficient quantity, would have been thrown upon the propositions, it appeared that only two witnesses had been fully heard. The examinations, therefore, were continued, and they went on till the 23rd. On this day, the order for the call of the house, which had been prolonged, standing unrepealed, there was a large attendance of members. A motion was then made, to get rid of the business altogether, but it failed. It was now seen, however, that it was impossible to bring the question to a final decision in this session; for they who were interested in it, affirmed that they had yet many important witnesses to introduce. Alderman Newnham, therefore, by the consent of Mr. Wilberforce, moved that "the further consideration of the subject be deferred to the next session." On this occasion, Mr. William Smith remarked, that though the decision on the great question was thus to be adjourned, he hoped the examinations at least would be permitted to go on. He had not heard any good reason why they might not be carried on for some weeks longer. It was known that the hearing of evidence was at all times thinly attended. If, therefore, the few members who did attend, were willing to give up their time a little longer, why should other members complain of an inconvenience in the suffering of which they took no share? He thought that by this proceeding, the examination of witnesses on the part of the merchants might be finished, and of consequence the business brought into a very desirable state of forwardness against the ensuing session. These observations had not the desired effect, and the motion of Mr. Alderman Newnham was carried without

a division. Thus the great question, for the elucidation of which all the new evidences were to be heard at the very first examination, in order that it might be decided by the 9th of June, was, by the intrigue of our opponents, deferred to another year.

The order of the day for going into the further consideration of the Slave Trade having been discharged, Sir William Dolben rose to state, that it was his intention to renew his bill of the former year, relative to the conveyance of the unhappy Africans from their own country to the West Indies, and to propose certain alterations in it. He made a motion accordingly, which was adopted; and he and Mr. Wilberforce were desired to prepare the same.

This bill he introduced soon afterwards, and it passed; but not without opposition. It was a matter, however, of great pleasure to find that the worthy baronet was enabled by the assistance of Captain (afterwards Admiral) Macbride, and other naval officers in the house, to carry such clauses, as provided in some degree for the comfort of the poor seamen who were seduced into this wicked trade. They could not, indeed, provide against the barbarity of their captains; but they secured them a space under the half deck in which to sleep. They prescribed a form of muster-rolls, which they were to see and sign in the presence of the clearing officer. They regulated their food, both as to kind and quantity; and they preserved them from many of the impositions to which they had been before exposed.

From the time when Mr. Wilberforce gave his first notice this session to the present, I had been variously employed, but more particularly in the composition of a new work. It was soon perceived to be the object of our opponents, to impress upon the public the preference of regulation to abolition. I attempted, therefore, to show the fallacy and wickedness of this notion. I divided the evils belonging to the Slave Trade into two kinds. These I enumerated in their order. With respect to those of the first kind, I proved that they were never to be remedied by any acts of the British parliament. Thus, for instance, what bill could alter the nature of the human passions? What bill could prevent fraud and violence in Africa, while the Slave Trade

existed there? What bill could prevent the miserable victims of the trade from rising, when on board the ships, if they saw an opportunity, and felt a keen sense of their oppression? Those of the second I stated to admit of a remedy, and after making accurate calculations on the subject of each, I showed that those merchants who were to do them away effectually, would be ruined by their voyages. The work was called *An Essay on the Comparative Efficiency of Regulation or Abolition as applied to the Slave Trade.*

The committee, also, in this interval, brought out their famous print of the plan and section of a slave-ship, which was designed to give the spectator an idea of the sufferings of the Africans in the Middle Passage, and this so familiarly, that he might instantly pronounce upon the miseries experienced there. The committee at Plymouth had been the first to suggest the idea; but that in London had now improved it. As this print seemed to make an instantaneous impression of horror upon all who saw it, and as it was therefore very instrumental, in consequence of the wide circulation given it, in serving the cause of the injured Africans, I have given the reader a copy of it in the annexed plate, and I will now state the ground or basis upon which it was formed.

It must be obvious that it became the committee to select some one ship, which had been engaged in the Slave Trade, with her real dimensions, if they meant to make a fair representation of the manner of the transportation. When Captain Parrey, of the royal navy, returned from Liverpool, to which place Government had sent him, he brought with him the admeasurement of several vessels which had been so employed, and laid them on the table of the House of Commons. At the top of his list stood the ship Brookes. The committee, therefore, in choosing a vessel on this occasion, made use of the ship Brookes; and this they did, because they thought it less objectionable to take the first that came, than any other. The vessel, then, in the plate is the vessel now mentioned, and the following is her admeasurement as given in by Captain Parrey.

	Ft.	In.
Length of the lower deck, gratings, and bulk heads included at A A	100	0
Breadth of beam on the lower deck inside, B B	25	4
Depth of hold C C C, from ceiling to ceiling	10	0
Height between decks from deck to deck	5	8
Length of the men's room, c c, on the lower deck	46	0
Breadth of the men's room, c c, on the lower deck	25	4
Length of the platform, D D, in the men's room	46	0
Breadth of the platform in the men's room, on each side	6	0
Length of the boys' room, E E	13	9
Breadth of the boys' room	25	0
Breadth of platform, F F, in boys' room	6	0
Length of women's room, G G	28	6
Breadth of women's room	23	6
Length of platform, H H, in women's room	28	6
Breadth of platform in women's room	6	0
Length of the gun-room, I I, on the lower deck	10	6
Breadth of the gun-room on the lower deck	12	0
Length of the quarter-deck, K K	33	6
Breadth of the quarter-deck	19	6
Length of the cabin, L L	14	0
Height of the cabin	6	2
Length of the half-deck, M M	16	6
Height of the half-deck	6	2
Length of the platform, N N, on the half-deck	16	6
Breadth of the platform on the half-deck	6	0
Upper deck, P P		

The committee, having proceeded thus far, thought that they should now allow certain dimensions for every man, woman, and child; and then see how many persons, upon such dimensions and upon the admeasurements just given, could be stowed in this vessel. They allowed, accordingly, to every man slave 6 ft. by 1 ft. 4 in. for room, to every woman 5 ft. by 1 ft. 4 in., to every boy 5 ft. by 1 ft. 2 in., and to every girl 4 ft. 6 in. by 1 ft. They then stowed them, and found them as in the annexed plate, that is, they found, (deducting the women stowed in z of figures 6 and 7, which spaces, being half of the half-deck, were allowed by Sir William Dolben's last bill to the seamen,) that only 450 could be stowed in her; and the reader will find, if he should think it worth while to count the figures in the plate, that, on making the deduction mentioned, they will amount to this number.

The committee then thought it right to inquire how many slaves the act of Sir William Dolben allowed this vessel to carry, and they found the number to be 454; that is, they found it

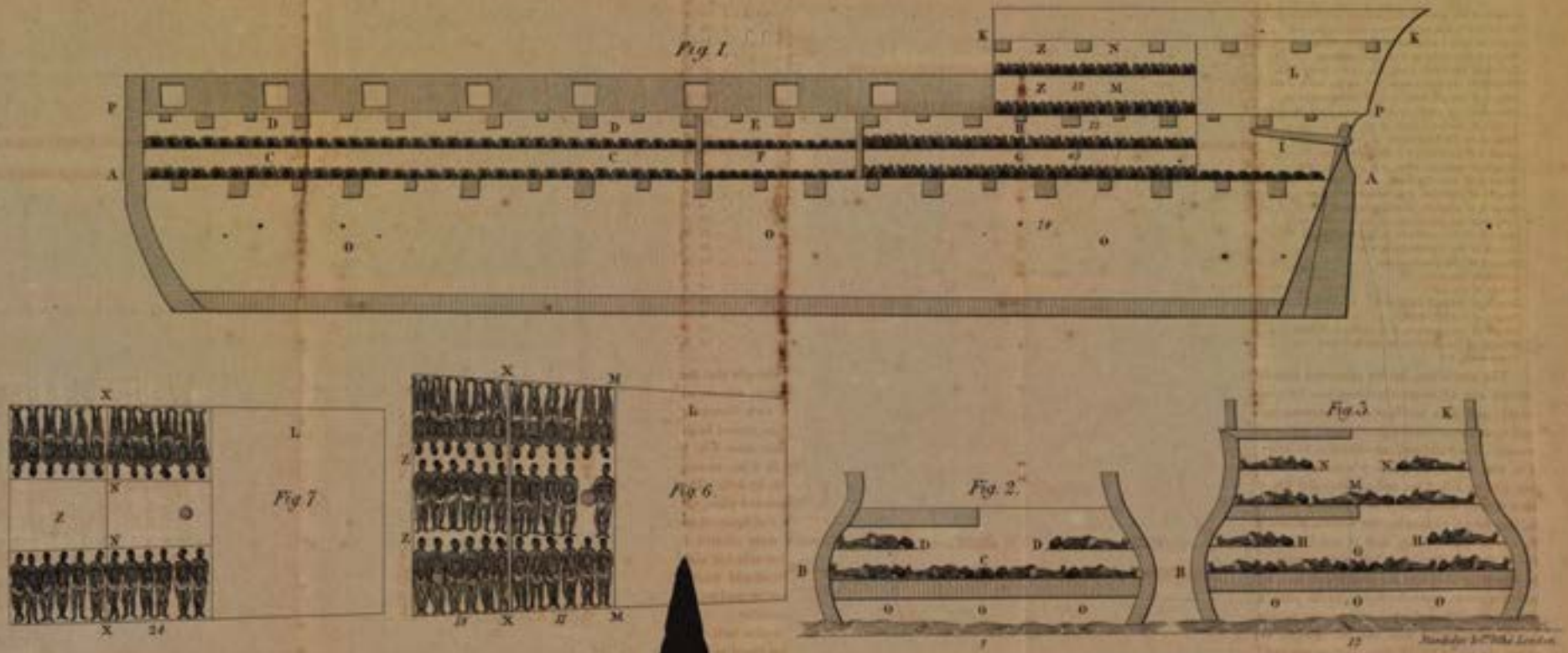


Fig. 1.
Fig. 2.
Fig. 3.
Fig. 6.
Fig. 7.

Fig.3.

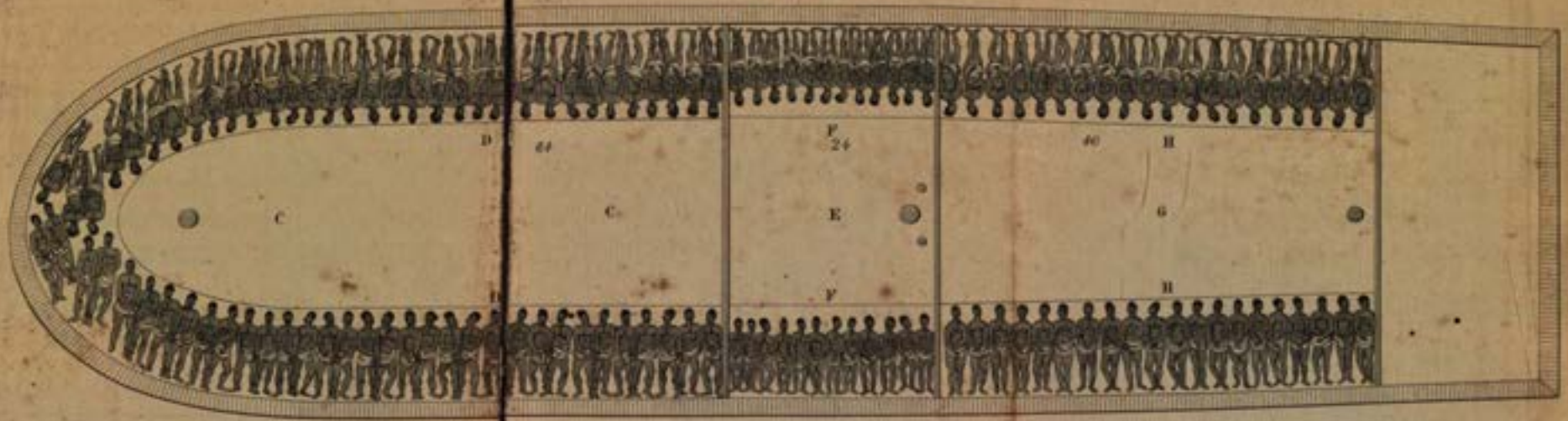
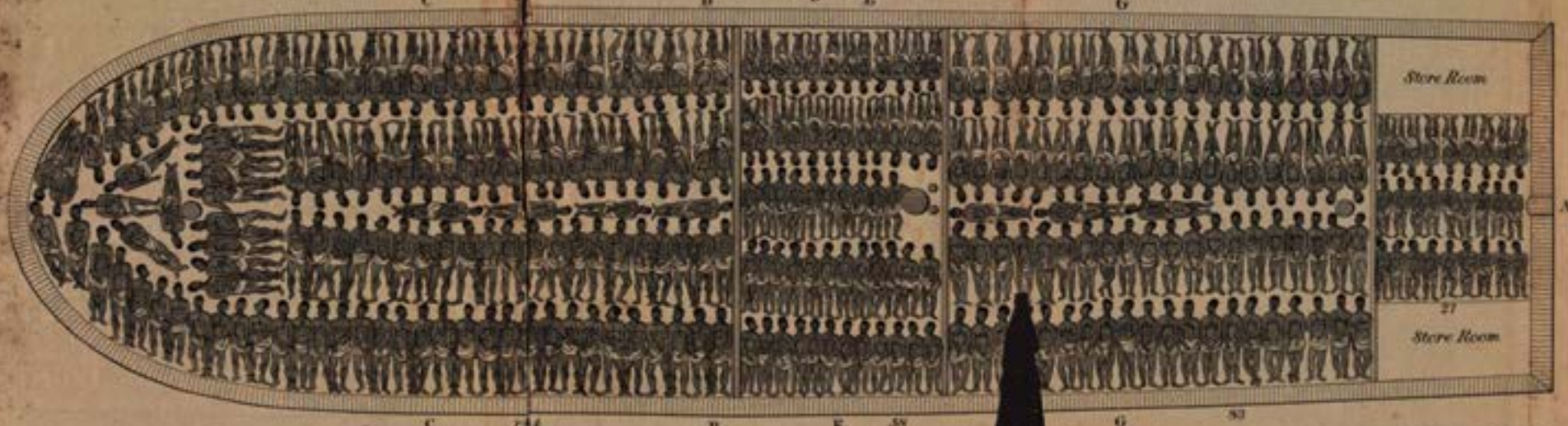


Fig.4.



allowed her to carry four more than could be put in without trespassing upon the room allotted to the rest; for we see that the bodies of the slaves, except just at the head of the vessel, already touch each other, and that no deduction has been made for tubs or stanchions to support the platforms and decks.

Such was the picture which the committee were obliged to draw, if they regarded mathematical accuracy, of the room allotted to the slaves in this vessel. By this picture was exhibited the nature of the Elysium which Mr. Norris and others had invented for them during their transportation from their own country. By this picture were seen also the advantages of Sir William Dolben's bill; for many, on looking at the plate, considered the regulation itself as perfect barbarism. The advantages, however, obtained by it were considerable; for the Brookes was now restricted to 450 slaves, whereas it was proved that she carried 609 in a former voyage.

The committee, at the conclusion of the session of parliament, made a suitable report. It will be unnecessary to detail this, for obvious reasons. There was, however, one thing contained in it, which ought not to be omitted. It stated, with appropriate concern, the death of the first controversial writer, and of one of the most able and indefatigable labourers in their cause. Mr. Ramsay had been for some time indisposed. The climate of the West Indies, during a residence of twenty years, and the agitation in which his mind had been kept for the last four years of his life, in consequence of the virulent attacks on his word and character by those interested in the continuance of the trade, had contributed to undermine his constitution. During his whole illness he was cheerful and composed; nor did he allow it to hinder him, severe as it was, from taking any opportunity which offered, of serving those unhappy persons for whose injuries he had so deeply felt. A few days only before he died, I received from him probably the last letter he ever wrote, of which the following is an extract:—

"My health has certainly taken a most alarming turn; and, if some considerable alteration does not take place for the better in a very little time, it will be all over with me: I mean as to

the present life. I have lost all appetite, and suffer grievously from an almost continual pain in my stomach, which leaves me no enjoyment of myself, but such as I can collect from my own reflections, and the comforts of religion. I am glad the bill for the abolition is in such forwardness. Whether it goes through the house or not, the discussion attending it will have a most beneficial effect. The whole of this business I think now to be in such a train, as to enable me to bid farewell to the present scene with the satisfaction of not having lived in vain, and of having done something towards the improvement of our common nature; and this at no little expense of time and reputation. The little I have now written is my utmost effort; yet yesterday I thought it necessary to write an answer to a scurrilous libel in *The Diary* by one Scipio. On my own account he should have remained unnoticed; but our great cause must be kept unsullied."

Mr. Ramsay was a man of active habit, of diligence and perseverance in his undertakings, and of extraordinary application. He was of mild and humble manners. He possessed a strong understanding, with great coolness and courage. Patriotism and public spirit were striking traits in his character. In domestic life he was amiable: in the ministry, exemplary and useful; and he died to the great regret of his parishioners; but most of all to that of those who moved with him in his attempts to bring about the important event of the abolition of the Slave Trade.

CHAPTER XXV.

Continuation from July 1789 to July 1790.—Author travels to Paris to promote the abolition in France; attends the committees of the Friends of the Negroes.—Counter-attempts of the committee of White Colonists.—An account of the deputies of Colour.—Meeting at the Duke de la Rochefoucauld's.—Mirabeau espouses the cause; canvasses the National Assembly.—Distribution of the section of the slave-ship there.—Character of Brissot.—Author leaves Paris and returns to England.—Examination of merchants' and planters' evidence resumed in the House of Commons.—Author travels in search of evidence in favour of the abolition; opposition to the hearing of it.—This evidence is at length introduced.—Renewal of Sir William Dolben's bill.—Distribution of the section of the slave-ship in England; and of Cowper's Negro's Complaint; and of Wedgewood's Cameos.

We usually find, as we give ourselves up to reflection, some little mitigation of the afflictions we experience; and yet of the evils which come upon us, some are often so heavy as to overpower the sources of consolation for a time, and to leave us wretched. This was nearly our situation at the close of the last session of parliament. It would be idle not to confess that circumstances had occurred which wounded us deeply. Though we had foiled our opponents at their own weapons, and had experienced the uninterrupted good wishes and support of the public, we had the great mortification to see the enthusiasm of members of parliament beginning to cool; to see a question of humanity and justice (for such it was when it was delivered into their hands) verging towards that of commercial calculation; and finally to see regulation, as it related to it, in the way of being substituted for abolition; but most of all were we affected, knowing as we did the nature and the extent of the sufferings belonging to the Slave Trade, that these should be continued to another year. This last consideration almost overpowered me. It had fallen to my lot, more than to that of any other person, to know these evils, and I seemed almost inconsolable at the postponement of the question. I wondered how members of parliament, and these Englishmen, could talk as they did on this subject; how they

could bear for a moment to consider their fellow-man as an article of trade; and how they should not count even the delay of an hour, which occasioned so much misery to continue, as one of the most criminal actions of their lives.

It was in vain, however, to sink under our burdens. Grief could do no good; and if our affairs had taken an unfavourable turn, the question was, how to restore them. It was sufficiently obvious that, if our opponents were left to themselves, or without any counteracting evidence, they would considerably soften down the propositions, if not invalidate them in the minds of many. They had such a power of selection of witnesses, that they could bring men forward who might say with truth that they had seen but very few of the evils complained of, and these in an inferior degree. We knew, also, from the example of the Liverpool delegates, how interest and prejudice could blind the eyes, and how others might be called upon to give their testimony, who would dwell upon the comforts of the Africans, when they came into our power; on the sprinkling of their apartments with frankincense; on the promotion of music and the dance among them; and on the health and festivity of their voyages. It seemed, therefore, necessary that we should again be looking out for evidence on the part of the abolition. Nor did it seem to me to be unreasonable, if our opponents were allowed to come forward in a new way, because it was more constitutional, that we should be allowed the same privilege. By these means the evidence, of which we had now lost the use, might be restored; indifference might be fanned into warmth; commercial calculation might be overpowered by justice; and abolition, rising above the reach of the cry of regulation, might eventually triumph.

I communicated my ideas to the committee, and offered to go round the kingdom to accomplish this object. The committee had themselves been considering what measures to take, and as each in his own mind had come to conclusions similar with my own, my proposal was no sooner made than adopted.

I had not been long upon this journey when I was called back. Mr. Wilberforce, always solicitous for the good of this great cause, was of opinion that, as commotions had taken place

in France, which then aimed at political reforms, it was possible that the leading persons concerned in them might, if an application were made to them judiciously, be induced to take the Slave Trade into their consideration, and incorporate it among the abuses to be done away. Such a measure, if realized, would not only lessen the quantity of human suffering, but annihilate a powerful political argument against us. He had a conference, therefore, with the committee on this subject; and, as they accorded with his opinion, they united with him in writing a letter to me, to know if I would change my journey, and proceed to France.

As I had no object in view but the good of the cause, it was immaterial to me where I went, if I could but serve it; and therefore, without any further delay, I returned to London.

As accounts had arrived in England of the excesses which had taken place in the city of Paris, and of the agitated state of the provinces through which I was to pass, I was desired by several of my friends to change my name. To this I could not consent; and, on consulting the committee, they were decidedly against it.

I was introduced as quickly as possible, on my arrival at Paris, to the friends of the cause there, to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, the Marquis de Condorcet, Messieurs Pétion de Villeneuve, Clavière, and Brissot, and to the Marquis de la Fayette. The latter received me with peculiar marks of attention. He had long felt for the wrongs of Africa, and had done much to prevent them. He had a plantation in Cayenne, and had devised a plan, by which the labourers upon it should pass by degrees from slavery to freedom. With this view he had there laid it down as a principle, that all crimes were equal, whether they were committed by Blacks or Whites, and ought equally to be punished. As the human mind is of such a nature, as to be acted upon by rewards as well as punishments, he thought it unreasonable, that the slaves should have no advantage from a stimulus from the former. He laid it down therefore as another principle, that temporal profits should follow virtuous action. To this he subjoined a reasonable education to be gradually given. By introducing such principles, and by making various regula-

tions for the protection and comforts of the slaves, he thought he could prove to the planters, that there was no necessity for the Slave Trade; that the slaves upon all their estates would increase sufficiently by population; that they might be introduced gradually, and without detriment, to a state of freedom; and that then the real interests of all would be most promoted. This system he had begun to act upon two years before I saw him. He had also, when the society was established in Paris, which took the name of "The Friends of the Negroes," enrolled himself a member of it.

The first public steps taken after my arrival in Paris were at a committee of the Friends of the Negroes, which was but thinly attended. None of those mentioned, except Brissot, were present. It was resolved there, that the committee should solicit an audience of Mr. Necker; and that I should wait upon him, accompanied by a deputation consisting of the Marquis de Condorcet, Monsieur de Bourge, and Brissot de Warwille: secondly, that the committee should write to the president of the National Assembly, and request the favour of him to appoint a day for hearing the cause of the Negroes; and thirdly, that it should be recommended to the committee in London to draw up a petition to the National Assembly of France, praying for the abolition of the Slave Trade by that country. This petition, it was observed, was to be signed by as great a number of the friends to the cause in England, as could be procured. It was then to be sent to the committee at Paris, who would take it in a body to the place of its destination.

I found great delicacy as a stranger in making my observations upon these resolutions, and yet I thought I ought not to pass them over wholly in silence, but particularly the last. I therefore rose up, and stated that there was one resolution, of which I did not quite see the propriety; but this might arise from my ignorance of the customs, as well as of the genius and spirit of the French people. It struck me that an application from a little committee in England to the National Assembly of France was not a dignified measure, nor was it likely to have weight with such a body. It was, besides, contrary to all the

habits of propriety in which I had been educated. The British Parliament did not usually receive petitions from the subjects of other nations. It was this feeling which had induced me thus to speak.

To these observations it was replied, that the National Assembly of France would glory in going contrary to the example of other nations in a case of generosity and justice, and that the petition in question, if it could be obtained, would have an influence there, which the people of England, unacquainted with the sentiments of the French nation, would hardly credit.

To this I had only to reply, that I would communicate the measure to the committee in London, but that I could not be answerable for the part they would take in it.

By an answer received from Mr. Necker, relative to the first of these resolutions, it appeared that the desired interview had been obtained; but he granted it only for a few minutes, and this principally to show his good-will to the cause: for he was then so oppressed with business in his own department, that he had but little time for any other. He wrote to me, however, the next day, and desired my company to dinner. He then expressed a wish to me, that any business relative to the Slave Trade might be managed by ourselves as individuals, and that I would take the opportunity of dining with him occasionally for this purpose. By this plan, he said, both of us would save time. Madame Necker, also, promised to represent her husband, if I should call in his absence, and to receive me, and converse with me on all occasions in which this great cause of humanity and religion might be concerned.

With respect to the other resolutions, nothing ever came of them; for we waited daily for an answer from the president during the whole of his presidency, but we never received any; and the committee in London, when they had read my letter, desired me unequivocally to say, that they did not see the propriety of the petition which it had been recommended to them to obtain.

At the next meeting it was resolved, that a letter should be written to the new president for the same purpose as the former.

This, it was said, was now rendered essentially necessary; for the merchants, planters, and others interested in the continuance of the Slave Trade, were so alarmed at the enthusiasm of the French people in favour of the new order of things, and of any change recommended to them, which had the appearance of promoting the cause of liberty, that they held daily committees to watch and to thwart the motions of the friends of the Negroes. It was therefore thought proper, that the appeal to the Assembly should be immediate on this subject, before the feelings of the people should cool, or before they, who were thus interested, should poison their minds by calculations of loss and gain. The silence of the former president was already attributed to the intrigues of the planters' committee. No time therefore was to be lost. The letter was accordingly written, but as no answer was ever returned to it, they attributed this second omission to the same cause.

I do not really know whether interested persons ever did, as was suspected, intercept the letters of the committee to the two presidents as now surmised; or whether they ever dissuaded them from introducing so important a question for discussion, when the nation was in such a heated state; but certain it is, that we had many, and I believe barbarous, enemies to encounter. At the very next meeting of the committee, Clavière produced anonymous letters which he had received, and in which it was stated that, if the society of the Friends of the Negroes did not dissolve itself, he and the rest of them would be stabbed. It was said that no less than three hundred persons had associated themselves for this purpose. I had received similar letters myself; and on producing mine, and comparing the handwriting in both it appeared that the same persons had written them.

In a few days after this, the public prints were filled with the most malicious representations of the views of the committee. One of them was, that they were going to send twelve thousand muskets to the Negroes in St. Domingo, in order to promote an insurrection there. This declaration was so industriously circulated, that a guard of soldiers was sent to search the committee-

room; but these were soon satisfied, when they found only two or three books and some waste paper. Reports equally unfounded and wicked were spread also in the same papers relative to myself. My name was mentioned at full length, and the place of my abode hinted at. It was stated at one time, that I had proposed such wild and mischievous plans to the committee in London relative to the abolition of the Slave Trade, that they had cast me out of their own body, and that I had taken refuge in Paris, where I now tried to impose equally on the French nation. It was stated at another, that I was employed by the British government as a spy, and that it was my object to try to undermine the noble constitution which was then forming for France. This latter report, at this particular time, when the passions of men were so inflamed, and when the stones of Paris had not been long purified from the blood of Foulon and Berthier, might have cost me my life; and I mentioned it to General la Fayette, and solicited his advice. He desired me to make a public reply to it: which I did. He desired me also to change my lodging to the Hotel de Yorck, that I might be nearer to him; and to send to him if there should be any appearance of a collection of people about the hotel, and I should have aid from the military in his quarter. He said, also, that he would immediately give in my name to the Municipality; and that he would pledge himself to them, that my views were strictly honourable.

On dining one day at the house of the Marquis de la Fayette, I met the deputies of colour. They had arrived only the preceding day from St. Domingo. I was desired to take my seat at dinner in the midst of them. They were six in number; of a sallow or swarthy complexion, but yet it was not darker than that of some of the natives of the south of France. They were already in the uniform of the Parisian National Guards; and one of them wore the cross of St. Louis. They were men of genteel appearance and modest behaviour. They seemed to be well informed, and of a more solid cast than those whom I was in the habit of seeing daily in this city. The account which they gave of themselves was this. The white people of St. Domingo, consisting of less than ten thousand persons, had deputies then

sitting in the National Assembly. The people of colour in the same island greatly exceeded the whites in number. They amounted to thirty thousand, and were generally proprietors of lands. They were equally free by law with the former, and paid their taxes to the mother-country in an equal proportion. But in consequence of having sprung from slaves they had no legislative power, and moreover were treated with great contempt. Believing that the mother-country was going to make a change in its political constitution, they had called a meeting on the island, and this meeting had deputed them to repair to France, and to desire the full rights of citizens, or that the free people of colour might be put upon an equality with the whites. They (the deputies) had come in consequence. They had brought with them a present of six millions of livres to the National Assembly, and an appointment to General la Fayette to be commander-in-chief over their constituents, as a distinct body. This command, they said, the general had accepted, though he had declined similar honours from every town in France, except Paris, in order to show that he patronized their cause.

I was now very anxious to know the sentiments which these gentlemen entertained on the subject of the Slave Trade. If they were with us, they might be very useful to us; not only by their votes in the Assembly, but by the knowledge of facts which they would be able to adduce there in our favour. If they were against us, it became me to be upon my guard against them, and to take measures accordingly. I therefore stated to them at once the nature of my errand to France, and desired their opinion upon it. This they gave me without reserve. They broke out into lavish commendations of my conduct, and called me their friend. The Slave Trade, they said, was the parent of all the miseries in St. Domingo, not only on account of the cruel treatment it occasioned to the slaves, but on account of the discord which it constantly kept up between the whites and people of colour, in consequence of the hateful distinctions it introduced. These distinctions could never be obliterated while it lasted. Indeed both the trade and the slavery must fall, before the infamy, now fixed upon a skin of colour, could be so done away, that

whites and blacks could meet cordially, and look with respect upon one another. They had it in their instructions, in case they should obtain a seat in the Assembly, to propose an immediate abolition of the Slave Trade, and an immediate amelioration of the state of slavery also, with a view to its final abolition in fifteen years.

But time was flying apace; I had now been nearly seven weeks in Paris, and had done nothing. The thought of this made me uneasy, and I saw no consoling prospect before me. I found it even difficult to obtain a meeting of the Friends of the Negroes. The Marquis de la Fayette had no time to attend. Those of the committee, who were members of the National Assembly, were almost constantly engaged at Versailles. Such of them as belonged to the Municipality, had enough to do at the Hotel de Ville. Others were employed either in learning the use of arms, or in keeping their daily and nightly guards. These circumstances made me almost despair of doing anything for the cause at Paris, at least in any reasonable time. But a new circumstance occurred, which distressed me greatly; for I discovered, in the most satisfactory manner, that two out of the six at the last committee were spies. They had come into the society for no other reason than to watch and report its motions; and they were in direct correspondence with the slave-merchants at Havre de Grace. This matter I brought home to them afterwards, and I had the pleasure of seeing them excluded from all our future meetings.

From this time I thought it expedient to depend less upon the committee, and more upon my own exertions; and I formed the resolution of going among the members of the National Assembly myself, and of learning from their own mouths the hope I ought to entertain relative to the decision of our question. In the course of my endeavours I obtained a promise from the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, the Comte de Mirabeau, the Abbé Siéyes, Monsieur Bergasse, and Monsieur Pétion de Villeneuve, five of the most approved members of the National Assembly, that they would meet me if I would fix a day. I obtained a similar promise from the Marquis de Condorcet, and Clavière

and Brissot, as members selected from the committee of the Friends of the Negroes. And Messieurs de Roveray and Du Monde, two Genevese gentlemen at Versailles, men of considerable knowledge and interest, and who had heard of our intended meeting, were to join us at their own request. The place chosen was the house of the Bishop of Chartres at Versailles.

I was now in hope that I should soon bring the question to some issue; and on the 4th of October I went to dine with the Bishop of Chartres to fix the day. We appointed the 7th. But how soon, frequently, do our prospects fade! From the conversation which took place at dinner, I began to fear that our meeting would not be realized. About three days before, the officers of the Garde du Corps had given the memorable banquet, recorded in the annals of the revolution, to the officers of the regiment of Flanders, which then lay at Versailles. This was a topic on which the company present dwelt. They condemned it as a most fatal measure in these heated times; and were apprehensive that something would grow immediately out of it, which might endanger the king's safety. In passing afterwards through the streets of Versailles my fears increased. I met several of that regiment in groups. Some were brandishing their swords. Others were walking arm in arm, and singing tumultuously. Others were standing and conversing earnestly together. Among the latter I heard one declare with great vehemence, "that it should not be; that the revolution must go on." On my arrival at Paris in the evening, the Palais Royal was full of people; and there were movements and buzzings among them, as if something was expected to happen. The next day, when I went into the streets, it was obvious what was going to take place. Suffice it to say, that the next evening the king and queen were brought prisoners into Paris. After this, things were in such an unsettled state for a few days, and the members of the National Assembly were so occupied in the consideration of the event itself, and of the consequences which might attend it, that my little meeting, of which it had cost me so much time and trouble to procure the appointment, was entirely prevented.

I had now to wait patiently till a new opportunity should

occur. The Comte de Mirabeau, before the departure of the king, had moved and carried the resolution, that "the Assembly was inseparable from his majesty's person." It was expected, therefore, that the National Assembly would immediately transfer its sittings to Paris. This took place on the 19th. It was now more easy for me to bring persons together, than when I had to travel backward and forward to Versailles. Accordingly, by watching my opportunities, I obtained the promise of another meeting. This was held afterwards at the Duke de la Rochefoucauld's. The persons before mentioned were present; except the Comte de Mirabeau, whose occupations at that moment made it utterly impossible for him to attend.

The duke opened the business in an appropriate manner; and concluded, by desiring each person to give his opinion frankly and unequivocally as to what might be expected of the National Assembly relative to the great measure of the abolition of the Slave Trade.

The Abbé Siéyes rose up, and said it would probably bring the business within a shorter compass if, instead of discussing this proposition at large, I were to put to the meeting my own questions. I accordingly accepted this offer, and began by asking those present "how long it was likely that the present National Assembly would sit?" After some conversation, it was replied that "it would sit till it had completed the constitution, and interwoven such fixed principles into it, that the legislature which should succeed it might have nothing more to do than to proceed on the ordinary business of the state. Its dissolution would probably not take place till the month of March."

I then asked them, "whether it was their opinion that the National Assembly would feel itself authorized to take up such a foreign question (if I might be allowed the expression) as that of the abolition of the Slave Trade." The answer to this was, "that the object of the National Assembly was undoubtedly the formation of a constitution for the French people. With respect to foreign possessions, it was very doubtful whether it were the real interest of France to have any colonies at all; but while it kept such colonies under its dominion, the Assembly would feel

that it had the right to take up this question; and that the question itself would naturally spring out of the bill of rights, which had already been adopted as the basis of the constitution."

The next question I proposed was, "whether they were of opinion that the National Assembly would do more wisely, in the present situation of things, to determine upon the abolition of the Slave Trade now, or to transfer it to the legislature, which was to succeed it in the month of March."

This question gave birth to a long discussion, during which much eloquence was displayed; but the unanimous answer, with the reasons for it, may be conveyed in substance as follows:— "It would be most wise," it was said, "in the present Assembly, to introduce the question to the notice of the nation, and this as essentially connected with the bill of rights, but to transfer the determination of it, in a way the best calculated to ensure success, to the succeeding legislature. The revolution was of more importance to Frenchmen than the abolition of the Slave Trade. To secure this was their first object, and more particularly because the other would naturally flow from it; but the revolution might be injured by the immediate determination of the question. Many persons in the large towns of Bourdeaux, Marseilles, Rouen, Nantes, and Havre, who were now friends to it, might be converted into enemies. It would also be held up by those who wished to produce a counter-revolution, (and the ignorant and prejudiced might believe it,) that the Assembly had made a great sacrifice to England by thus giving her an opportunity of enlarging her trade. The English House of Commons had taken up the subject, but had done nothing; and though they, who were then present, were convinced of the sincerity of the English minister who had introduced it, and that the trade must ultimately fall in England, yet it would not be easy to persuade many bigoted persons in France of these truths. It would, therefore, be most wise in the Assembly only to introduce the subject as mentioned; but if extraordinary circumstances should arise, such as a decree that the deputies of Colour should take their seats in the Assembly, or that England should have begun this great work, advantage might be taken of them, and the abo-

lition of the Slave Trade might be resolved upon in the present session."

The last question I proposed was this:—"If the determination of this great question should be proposed to the next legislature, would it be more difficult to carry it then than now?"

This question also produced much conversation; but the answer was unanimous, "that there would be no greater difficulty in the one than in the other case; for that the people would daily more and more admire their constitution; that this constitution would go down to the next legislature, from whence would issue solid and fixed principles, which would be resorted to as a standard for decision on all occasions. Hence the Slave Trade, which would be adjudged by it also, could not possibly stand. Add to which, that the most virtuous members in the present would be chosen into the new legislature, which, if the constitution were but once fairly established, would not regard the murmurs of any town or province." After this a desultory conversation took place, in which some were of opinion that it would be proper, on the introduction of the subject into the Assembly, to move for a committee of inquiry, which should collect facts and documents against the time when it should be taken up with a view to its final discussion.

As it now appeared to me that nothing material would be done with respect to our cause till after the election of the new legislature, I had thoughts of returning to England to resume my journey in quest of evidence; but I judged it right to communicate first with the Comte de Mirabeau and the Marquis de la Fayette, both of whom would have attended the meeting just mentioned, if unforeseen circumstances had not prevented them.

On conversing with the first, I found that he differed from those whom I had consulted. He thought that the question, on account of the nature and urgency of it, ought to be decided in the present legislature. This was so much his opinion, that he had made a determination to introduce it there himself; and had been preparing for his motion. He had already drawn up the outlines of a speech for the purpose; but was in want of cir-

cumstantial knowledge to complete it. With this knowledge he desired me to furnish him. He then put his speech into my hand, and wished me to take it home and peruse it. He wrote down, also, some questions, and he gave them to me directly afterwards, and begged I would answer them at my leisure.

On conversing with the latter, he said, "that he believed with those of the meeting that there would be no greater difficulty in carrying the question in the succeeding than in the present legislature; but this consideration afforded an argument for the immediate discussion of it; for it would make a considerable difference to suffering humanity whether it were to be decided now or then. This was the moment to be taken to introduce it; nor did he think that they ought to be deterred from doing it by any supposed clamours from some of the towns in France. The great body of the people admired the constitution, and would support any decisions which were made in strict conformity to its principles. With respect to any committee of inquiry, he deprecated it. The Slave Trade, he said, was not a trade. It dishonoured the name of commerce. It was piracy. But if so, the question which it involved was a question of justice only; and it could not be decided with propriety by any other standard." I then informed him that the Comte de Mirabeau had undertaken to introduce it into the Assembly. At this he expressed his uneasiness. "Mirabeau," says he, "is a host in himself; and I should not be surprised if by his own eloquence and popularity only he were to carry it; and yet I regret that he has taken the lead in it. The cause is so lovely that even ambition, abstractedly considered, is too impure to take it under its protection, and not to sully it. It should have been placed in the hands of the most virtuous man in France. This man is the Duc de la Rochefoucauld. But you cannot alter things now. You cannot take it out of his hands. I am sure he will be second to no one on this occasion."

On my return to my hotel, I perused the outlines of the speech which the Comte de Mirabeau had lent me. It afforded a masterly knowledge of the evils of the trade, as drawn from

reason only. It was put together in the most striking and affecting manner. It contained an almost irresistible appeal to his auditors by frequent references to the ancient system of things in France, and to their situation and prospects under the new. It flowed at first gently like a river in a level country; but it grew afterwards into a mountain-torrent, and carried everything before it. On looking at the questions which he had written down for me, I found them consist of three. 1. What are the different ways of reducing to slavery the inhabitants of that part of Africa which is under the dominion of France? 2. What is the state of society there with respect to government, industry, and the arts? 3. What are the various evils belonging to the transportation of the Africans from their own country?

It was peculiarly agreeable to me to find, on reading the first two questions, that I had formed an acquaintance with Monsieur Geoffroy de Villeneuve, who had been aide-du-camp to the Chevalier de Boufflers at Goree; but who was then at his father's house in Paris. This gentleman had entertained Dr. Spaarman and Mr. Wadstrom; and had accompanied them up the Senegal, when under the protection of the French government in Africa. He had confirmed to me the testimony which they had given before the privy council: but he had a fund of information on this subject, which went far beyond what these possessed, or I had ever yet collected from books or men. He had travelled all over the kingdom of Cayor on foot; and had made a map of it. His information was so important, that I had been with him for almost days together to take it down. I determined, therefore, to arrange the facts which I had obtained from him, of which I had now a volume, that I might answer the two first questions, which had been proposed to me; for it was of great importance to the Comte de Mirabeau, that he should be able to appeal, in behalf of the statements in his speech to the Assembly, to an evidence on the spot.

In the course of my correspondence with the Comte, which continued with but little intermission for six weeks, many circumstances took place, which were connected with the cause, and which I shall now detail in their order.

On waiting upon Mr. Necker, at his own request, he gave me the pleasing intelligence, that the committee of finances, which was then composed of members of the National Assembly, had resolved, though they had not yet promulgated their resolution, upon a total abolition of all the bounties then in existence in favour of the Slave Trade.

The Deputies of Colour now began to visit me at my own hotel. They informed me, that they had been admitted, since they had seen me, into the National Assembly. On stating their claims, the president assured them, that they might take courage; for that the assembly knew no distinction between Blacks and Whites, but considered all men as having equal rights. This speech of the president, they said, had roused all the White Colonists in Paris. Some of these had openly insulted them. They had held also a meeting on the subject of this speech; at which they had worked themselves up so as to become quite furious. Nothing but intrigue was now going forward among them to put off the consideration of the claims of the free People of Colour. They, the deputies, had been flattered by the prospect of a hearing no less than six times; and, when the day arrived, something had constantly occurred to prevent it.

At a subsequent interview, they appeared to be quite disheartened; and to be grievously disappointed as to the object of their mission. They were now sure, that they should never be able to make head against the intrigues and plots of the White Colonists. Day after day had been fixed as before for the hearing of their cause. Day after day it had been deferred in like manner. They were now weary with waiting. One of them, Ogé, could not contain himself, but broke out with great warmth —"I begin," says he, "not to care whether the National Assembly will admit us or not. But let it beware of the consequences. We will no longer continue to be beheld in a degraded light. Dispatches shall go directly to St. Domingo; and we will soon follow them. We can produce as good soldiers on our estates, as those in France. Our own arms shall make us independent and respectable. If we are once forced to desperate measures, it will be in vain that thousands will be sent across the

Atlantic to bring us back to our former state." On hearing this, I entreated the deputies to wait with patience. I observed to them, that in a great revolution, like that of France, things, but more particularly such as might be thought external, could not be discussed either so soon or so rapidly as men full of enthusiasm would wish. France would first take care of herself. She would then, I had no doubt, extend her care to her Colonies. Was not this a reasonable conclusion, when they, the deputies, had almost all the first men in the Assembly in their favour? I entreated them therefore to wait patiently; as well as upon another consideration, which was, that by an imprudent conduct they might not only ruin their own cause in France, but bring indescribable misery upon their native land.

By this time a large packet, for which I had sent, from England, arrived. It consisted of above a thousand of the plan and section of a slave-ship, with an explanation in French. It contained, also, about five hundred coloured engravings, made from two views, which Mr. Wadstrom had taken in Africa. The first of these represented the town of Joal, and the king's military on horseback returning to it, after having executed the great pillage, with their slaves. The other represented the village of Bain; from whence ruffians were forcing a poor woman and her children to sell them to a ship, which was then lying in the Roads. Both these scenes Mr. Wadstrom had witnessed. I had collected, also, by this time, one thousand of my Essays on the *Impolicy of the Slave Trade*, which had been translated into the French language. These I now wished to distribute, as preparatory to the motion of Mirabeau, among the National Assembly. This distribution was afterwards undertaken and effected by the Archbishop of Aix, the Bishop of Chartres, the Marquis de la Fayette, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, the Comte de Mirabeau, Monsieur Necker, the Marquis de Condorcet, Messieurs Pétion de Villeneuve, Bergasse, Clavière and Brissot, and by the Marchioness de la Fayette, Madame Necker, and Madame de Poivre, the latter of whom was the widow of the late intendant of the Isle of France.

This distribution had not been long begun, before I witnessed

its effects. The virtuous Abbé Gregoire, and several members of the National Assembly, called upon me. The section of the slave-ship, it appeared, had been the means of drawing them towards me. They wished for more accurate information concerning it. Indeed, it made its impression upon all who saw it. The Bishop of Chartres once told me, that, when he first espoused our cause, he did it at once; for it seemed obvious to him that no one could, under the Christian dispensation, hold another as his slave; and it was no less obvious, where such an unnatural state existed, that there would be great abuses; but that, nevertheless, he had not given credit to all the tales which had been related of the Slave Trade, till he had seen this plate; after which there was nothing so barbarous which might not readily be believed. The Archbishop of Aix, when I first showed him the same plate, was so struck with horror, that he could scarcely speak: and when Mirabeau first saw it, he was so impressed by it, that he ordered a mechanic to make a model of it in wood, at a considerable expense. This model he kept afterwards in his dining-room. It was a ship in miniature, about a yard long, and little wooden men and women, which were painted black to represent the slaves, were seen stowed in their proper places.

But while the distribution of these different articles thus contributed to make us many friends, it called forth the extraordinary exertions of our enemies. The merchants and others interested in the continuance of the Slave Trade wrote letters to the Archbishop of Aix, beseeching him not to ruin France; which he would inevitably do, if, as then president, he were to grant a day for hearing the question of the abolition. Offers of money were made to Mirabeau from the same quarter, if he would totally abandon his motion. An attempt was made to establish a colonial committee, consisting of such planters as were members of the National Assembly; upon whom it should devolve to consider and report upon all matters relating to the Colonies, before they could be determined there. Books were circulated in abundance in opposition to mine. Resort was again had to the public papers, as the means of raising a hue and cry against the principles of the Friends of the Negroes. I was again denounced

as a spy; and as one sent by the English minister to bribe members in the Assembly to do that in a time of public agitation, which in the settled state of France they could never have been prevailed upon to accomplish. And as a proof that this was my errand, it was requested of every Frenchman to put to himself the following question, "How it happened that England, which had considered the subject coolly and deliberately for eighteen months, and this in a state of internal peace and quietness, had not abolished the Slave Trade?"

The clamour which was now made against the abolition pervaded all Paris, and reached the ears of the king; Mr. Necker had a long conversation with him upon it; the latter sent for me immediately. He informed me that His Majesty was desirous of making himself master of the question, and had expressed a wish to see my *Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave Trade;* he desired to have two copies of it, one in French, and the other in English, and he would then take his choice as to which of them he would read; he (Mr. Necker) was to present them. He would take with him, also, at the same time, the beautiful specimens of the manufactures of the Africans, which I had lent to Madame Necker out of the cabinet of Monsieur Geoffroy de Villeneuve and others; as to the section of the slave-ship, he thought it would affect His Majesty too much, as he was then indisposed. All these articles, except the latter, were at length presented; the king bestowed a good deal of time upon the specimens; he admired them, but particularly those in gold. He expressed his surprise at the state of some of the arts in Africa. He sent them back on the same day on which he had examined them, and commissioned Mr. Necker to return me his thanks, and to say that he had been highly gratified with what he had seen; and, with respect to the *Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave Trade,* that he would read it with all the seriousness which such a subject deserved.

My correspondence with the Comte de Mirabeau was now drawing near to its close. I had sent him a letter every other day for a whole month, which contained from sixteen to twenty pages; he usually acknowledged the receipt of each; hence many of his letters came into my possession: these were always interest-

ing, on account of the richness of the expressions they contained. Mirabeau even in his ordinary discourse was eloquent; it was his peculiar talent to use such words, that they who heard them were almost led to believe that he had taken great pains to cull them for the occasion. But this his ordinary language was the language also of his letters; and as they show a power of expression, by which the reader may judge of the character of the eloquence of one, who was then undoubtedly the greatest orator in France, I have thought it not improper to submit one of them to his perusal in the annexed note*. I could have wished, as far as it relates to myself, that it had been less complimentary. It must be observed, however, that I had already written to him more than two hundred pages with my own hand; and as this was done at no small expense, time, and trouble, and solely to qualify him for the office of doing good, he could not but set some value upon my labours.

When our correspondence was over, I had some conversation with him relative to fixing a day for the motion. But he judged it prudent, previously to this, to sound some of the members of the Assembly on the subject of it. This he did, but he was greatly disappointed at the result; there was not one member, out of all those with whom he conversed, who had not been canvassed by the planters' committee; and though most of them had been proof against all its intrigues and artifices, yet many of them hesitated respecting the abolition at that moment. There was a fear in some that they should injure the revolution by adopting it; others, who had no such fears, wished for the concurrence of England in the measure, and suggested the propriety of a deputation there for that purpose previously to the discussion of the

* Je fais toujours mille remercimens plus empressés et plus affectueux à Monsieur Clarkson pour la vertueuse profusion de ses lumières, de ses recherches, et de ses travaux. Comme ma motion et tous ses développemens sont entièrement prêts, j' attends avec une vive impatience ses nouvelles lettres, afin d'achever de classer les faits et les raisonnemens de Monsieur Clarkson, et, cette déduction entièrement finie, de commencer à manœuvrer en tactique le succès douteux de cette périlleuse proposition. J' aurai l'honneur de le recevoir Dimanche depuis onze heures, et même dix du matin jusqu'à midi, non seulement avec un vif plaisir, mais avec une sensible reconnaissance.

25th Décembre, 1789. LE COMTE DE MIRABEAU.

question in France. While others maintained that, as England had done nothing, after having had it so long under consideration, it was fair to presume that she judged it impolitic to abandon the Slave Trade; but if France were to give it up, and England to continue it, how would humanity be the gainer?

While the Comte de Mirabeau was continuing his canvass among the members of the National Assembly, relative to his motion, attempts were again made in the public papers to mislead them; emancipation was now stated to be the object of the friends of the negroes. This charge I repelled, by addressing myself to Monsieur Beauvet. I explained to him the views of the different societies which had taken up the cause of the Africans; and I desired him to show my letter to the planters. I was obliged also to answer publicly a letter by Monsieur Mosneron de Laung. This writer professed to detail the substance of the privy council report. He had the injustice to assert that three things had been distinctly proved there: First, that slavery had always existed in Africa; Secondly, that the natives were a bloody people, addicted to human sacrifice, and other barbarous customs; and, Thirdly, that their soil was incapable of producing any proper articles for commerce. From these premises he argued, as if they had been established by the unanimous and uncontradicted testimony of the witnesses; and he drew the conclusion, that not only had England done nothing in consequence, but that she never would do anything which should affect the existence of this trade.

But these letters had only just made their appearance in the public papers, when I was summoned to England; parliament, it appeared, had met, and I was immediately to leave Paris. Among those of whom I had but just time to take leave, were the deputies of colour. At this, my last conference with them, I recommended moderation and forbearance, as the best gifts I could leave them; and I entreated them rather to give up their seats in the Assembly, than on that account to bring misery on their country; for that with patience their cause would ultimately triumph. They replied, that I had prescribed to them a most difficult task; they were afraid that neither the conduct of the white colonists nor of the National Assembly could be much

longer borne; they thanked me, however, for my advice. One of them gave me a trinket, by which I might remember him; and as for himself, he said he should never forget one, who had taken such a deep interest in the welfare of his mother*. I found, however, notwithstanding all I said, that there was a spirit of dissatisfaction in them, which nothing but a redress of their grievances could subdue; and that, if the planters should persevere in their intrigues, and the National Assembly in delay, a fire would be lighted up in St. Domingo, which could not easily be extinguished. This was afterwards realized: for Ogé, in about three months from this time, left his companions, to report to his constituents in St. Domingo the state of their mission; when hearing, on his arrival in that island, of the outrageous conduct of the whites of the committee of Aquin, who had begun a persecution of the people of colour, for no other reason than that they had dared to seek the common privileges of citizens, and of the murder of Ferrand and Labadie, he imprudently armed his slaves. With a small but faithful band he rushed upon superior numbers, and was defeated; taking refuge at length in the Spanish part of St. Domingo, he was given up, and his enemies, to strike terror into the people of colour, broke him upon the wheel. From this time reconciliation between the parties became impossible; a bloody war commenced, and with it all those horrors which it has been our lot so frequently to deplore. It must be remembered, however, that the Slave Trade, by means of the cruel distinctions it occasioned, was the original cause; and though the revolution of France afforded the occasion, it was an occasion which would have been prevented, if it had not been for the intrigues and injustice of the whites.

'Another upon whom I had time to call was the amiable bishop of Chartres. When I left him, the Abbé Siéyes, who was with him, desired to walk with me to my hotel; he there presented me with a set of his works, which he sent for while he staid with me; and, on parting, he made use of this complimentary expression, in allusion, I suppose, to the cause I had undertaken,—"I am pleased to have been acquainted with the friend of man."

It was necessary that I should see the Comte de Mirabeau

* Africa.

and the Marquis de la Fayette before I left Paris. I had written to each of them to communicate the intelligence of my departure, as soon as I received it. The comte, it appeared had nearly canvassed the Assembly; he could count upon three hundred members, who, for the sake of justice, and without any consideration of policy or of consequences, would support his motion. But alas! what proportion did this number bear to twelve hundred? About five hundred more would support him, but only on one condition, which was, if England would give an unequivocal proof of her intention to abolish the trade. The knowledge of these circumstances, he said, had induced him to write a letter to Mr. Pitt. In this he had explained how far he could proceed without his assistance, and how far with it. He had frankly developed to him the mind and temper of the Assembly on this subject; but his answer must be immediate, for the white colonists were daily gaining such an influence there, that he forsaw that it would be impossible to carry the measure, if it were long delayed. On taking leave of him he desired me to be the bearer of the letter, and to present it to Mr. Pitt.

On conversing with the Marquis de la Fayette, he lamented deeply the unexpected turn which the cause of the Negroes had lately taken in the Assembly. It was entirely owing to the daily intrigues of the White Colonists. He feared they would ruin everything. If the Deputies of Colour had been heard on their arrival, their rights would have been acknowledged. But now there was little probability that they would obtain them. He foresaw nothing but desolation in St. Domingo. With respect to the abolition of the Slave Trade, it might be yet carried; but not unless England would concur in the measure. On this topic he enlarged with much feeling. He hoped the day was near at hand, when two great nations, which had been hitherto distinguished only for their hostility, one toward the other, would unite in so sublime a measure; and that they would follow up their union by another, still more lovely, for the preservation of eternal and universal peace. Thus their future rivalships might have the extraordinary merit of being rivalships in good. Thus the revolution of France, through the mighty aid of England, might become the source of

civilization, of freedom, and of happiness to the whole world. No other nations were sufficiently enlightened for such an union, but all other nations might be benefited by it.

The last person whom I saw was Brissot. He accompanied me to my carriage. With him, therefore, I shall end my French account; and I shall end it in no way so satisfactory to myself, as in a very concise vindication of his character, from actual knowledge, against the attacks of those who have endeavoured to disparage it; but who never knew him. Justice and truth, I am convinced, demand some little declaration on this subject at my hands. Brissot then was a man of plain and modest appearance. His habits, contrary to those of his countrymen in general, were domestic. In his own family he set an amiable example, both as a husband and as a father. On all occasions he was a faithful friend. He was particularly watchful over his private conduct. From the simplicity of his appearance, and the severity of his morals, he was called "The Quaker;" at least in all the circles which I frequented. He was a man of deep feeling. He was charitable to the poor as far as a slender income permitted him. But his benevolence went beyond the usual bounds. He was no patriot in the ordinary acceptation of the word; for he took the habitable globe as his country, and wished to consider every foreigner as his brother.

I left France, as it may be easily imagined, much disappointed, that my labours, which had been of nearly six months continuance, should have had no better success; nor did I see, in looking forward, any circumstances that were consoling with respect to the issue of them there; for it was impossible that Mr. Pitt, even if he had been inclined to write to Mirabeau, circumstanced as matters then were with respect to the hearing of evidence, could have given him a promise, at least of a speedy abolition; and, unless his answer had been immediate, it would have arrived, seeing that the French planters were daily profiting by their intrigues, too late to be effectual.

I had but just arrived in England, when Mr. Wilberforce made a new motion in the House of Commons on the subject of the Slave Trade. In referring to the transactions of the last

session, he found that twenty-eight days had been allotted to the hearing of witnesses against the abolition, and that eleven persons only had been examined in that time. If the examinations were to go on in the same manner, they might be made to last for years. He resolved, therefore, to move, that, instead of hearing evidence in future in the house at large, members should hear it in an open committee above stairs; which committee should sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the house itself. This motion he made; and in doing it he took an opportunity of correcting an erroneous report; which was, that he had changed his mind on this great subject. This was, he said, so far from being the case, that the more he contemplated the trade, the more enormous he found it, and the more he felt himself compelled to persevere in endeavours for its abolition.

One would have thought that a motion, so reasonable and so constitutional, would have met with the approbation of all; but it was vehemently opposed by Mr. Gascoyne, Alderman Newnham, and others. The plea set up was, that there was no precedent for referring a question of such importance to a committee. It was now obvious, that the real object of our opponents in abandoning decision by the privy council evidence was delay. Unable to meet us there, they were glad to fly to any measure, which should enable them to put off the evil day. This charge was fixed upon them in unequivocal language by Mr. Fox; who observed besides, that if the members of the house should then resolve to hear evidence in a committee of the whole house as before, it would amount to a resolution, that the question of the abolition of the Slave Trade should be put by, or at least that it should never be decided by them. After a long debate, the motion of Mr. Wilberforce was voted without a division; and the examination of witnesses proceeded in behalf of those who were interested in the continuance of the trade.

This measure having been resolved upon, by which despatch in the examinations was promoted, I was alarmed lest we should be called upon for our own evidence, before we were fully prepared. The time which I had originally allotted for the discovery of new witnesses, had been taken up, if not wasted, in

France. In looking over the names of the sixteen, who were to have been examined by the committee of privy council, if there had been time, one had died, and eight, who were sea-faring people, were out of the kingdom. It was time, therefore, to stir immediately in this business. Happily, on looking over my letters, which I found on my arrival in England, the names of several had been handed to me, with the places of their abode, who could give me information on the subject of our question. All these I visited with the utmost despatch. I was absent only three weeks. I had travelled a thousand miles in this time, had conversed with seventeen persons, and had prevailed upon three to be examined.

I had scarcely returned with the addition of these witnesses to my list, when I found it necessary to go out again upon the same errand. This second journey arose in part from the following circumstances. There was a matter in dispute relative to the mode of obtaining slaves in the rivers of Calabar and Bonny. It was usual, when the slave-ships lay there, for a number of canoes to go into the inland country. These went in a fleet. There might be from thirty to forty armed natives in each of them. Every canoe, also, had a four or a six-pounder (cannon) fastened to her bow. Equipped in this manner they departed; and they were usually absent from eight to fourteen days. It was said that they went to fairs, which were held on the banks of these rivers, and at which there was a regular show of slaves. On their return they usually brought down from eight hundred to a thousand of these for the ships. These lay at the bottom of the canoes; their arms and legs having been first bound by the ropes of the country. Now the question was, how the people, thus going up these rivers, obtained their slaves?

It was certainly a very suspicious circumstance, that such a number of persons should go out upon these occasions; and that they should be armed in such a manner. We presumed, therefore, that, though they might buy many of the slaves, whom they brought down, at the fairs which have been mentioned, they obtained others by violence, as opportunity offered. This inference we pressed upon our opponents; and called upon them to

show what circumstances made such warlike preparations necessary on these excursions. To this they replied readily. "The people in the canoes," said they, "pass through the territories of different petty princes; to each of whom, on entering his territory, they pay a tribute or toll. This tribute has been long fixed; but attempts frequently have been made to raise it. They who follow the trade cannot afford to submit to these unreasonable demands; and therefore they arm themselves in case of any determination on the part of these petty princes to enforce them."

This answer we never judged to be satisfactory. We tried, therefore, to throw light upon the subject, by inquiring if the natives who went upon these expeditions usually took with them as many goods as would amount to the number of the slaves they were accustomed to bring back with them. But we could get no direct answer, from any actual knowledge, to this question. All had seen the canoes go out and return; but no one had seen them loaded, or had been on board them. It appeared, however, from circumstantial evidence, that though the natives on these occasions might take some articles of trade with them, it was impossible from appearances that they could take them in the proportion mentioned. We maintained, then, our inference as before; but it was still uniformly denied.

How then were we to decide this important question? for it was said that no white man was ever permitted by the natives to go up in these canoes. On mentioning accidentally the circumstances of the case, as I have now stated them, to a friend, immediately on my return from my last journey, he informed me that he himself had been in company, about a year before, with a sailor, a very respectable-looking man, who had been up these rivers. He had spent half an hour with him at an inn. He described his person to me; but he knew nothing of his name, or of the place of his abode. All he knew was, that he was either going, or that he belonged to, some ship of war in ordinary; but he could not tell at what port. I might depend upon all these circumstances if the man had not deceived him; and he saw no reason why he should.

I felt myself set on fire, as it were, by this intelligence, defi-

cient as it was; and I seemed to determine instantly that I would, if it were possible, find him out. For if our suspicions were true that the natives frequently were kidnapped in these expeditions, it would be of great importance to the cause of the abolition to have them confirmed; for as many slaves came annually from these two rivers, as from all the coast of Africa besides. But how to proceed on so blind an errand was the question. I first thought of trying to trace the man by letter; but this might be tedious. The examinations were now going on rapidly. We should soon be called upon for evidence ourselves; besides, I knew nothing of his name. I then thought it to be a more effectual way to apply to Sir Charles Middleton, as comptroller of the navy, by whose permission I could board every ship of war in ordinary in England, and judge for myself. But here the undertaking seemed very arduous, and the time it would consume became an objection in this respect, that I thought I could not easily forgive myself, if I were to fail in it. My inclination, however, preponderated this way. At length I determined to follow it; for, on deliberate consideration, I found that I could not employ my time more advantageously to the cause; for as other witnesses must be found out somewhere, it was highly probable that, if I should fail in the discovery of this man, I should, by moving among such a number of sea-faring people, find others who could give their testimony in our favour.

I must now inform the reader, that ships of war in ordinary, in one of which this man was reported to be, are those which are out of commission, and which are laid up in the different rivers and waters in the neighbourhood of the king's dock-yards. Every one of these has a boatswain, gunner, carpenter, and assistants on board. They lie usually in divisions of ten or twelve; and a master in the navy has a command over every division.

At length I began my journey. I boarded all the ships of war lying in ordinary at Deptford, and examined the different persons in each. From Deptford I proceeded to Woolwich, where I did the same. Thence I hastened to Chatham, and then, down the Medway, to Sheerness. I had now boarded

above a hundred and sixty vessels of war. I had found out two good and willing evidences among them; but I could gain no intelligence of him who was the object of my search.

From Chatham I made the best of my way to Portsmouth-harbour. A very formidable task presented itself here; but the masters' boats were ready for me, and I continued my pursuit. On boarding the Pegase, on the second day, I discovered a very respectable person in the gunner of that ship. His name was George Millar. He had been on board the Canterbury slave-ship at the dreadful massacre at Calabar. He was the only disinterested evidence living, of whom I had yet heard. He expressed his willingness to give his testimony, if his presence should be thought necessary in London. I then continued my pursuit for the remainder of the day. On the next day I resumed and finished it for this quarter. I had now examined the different persons in more than a hundred vessels in this harbour, but I had not discovered the person I had gone to seek.

Matters now began to look rather disheartening, I mean as far as my grand object was concerned. There was but one other port left, and this was between two and three hundred miles distant. I determined, however, to go to Plymouth. I had already been more successful in this tour, with respect to obtaining general evidence, than in any other of the same length; and the probability was, that as I should continue to move among the same kind of people, my success would be in a similar proportion according to the number visited. These were great encouragements to me to proceed. At length I arrived at the place of my last hope. On my first day's expedition I boarded forty vessels, but found no one in these who had been on the coast of Africa in the Slave Trade. One or two had been there in king's ships; but they had never been on shore. Things were now drawing near to a close; and, notwithstanding my success as to general evidence in this journey, my heart began to beat. I was restless and uneasy during the night. The next morning I felt agitated again between the alternate pressure of hope and fear; and in this state I entered my boat. The fifty-seventh vessel which I boarded in this harbour was the Melampus frigate. One person

belonging to it, on examining him in the captain's cabin, said he had been two voyages to Africa; and I had not long discoursed with him before I found, to my inexpressible joy, that he was the man. I found, too, that he unravelled the question in dispute precisely as our inferences had determined it. He had been two expeditions up the river Calabar in the canoes of the natives. In the first of these, they came within a certain distance of a village. They then concealed themselves under the bushes, which hung over the water from the banks. In this position they remained during day-light; but at night they went up to it armed, and seized all the inhabitants, who had not time to make their escape. They obtained forty-five persons in this manner. In the second, they were out eight or nine days, when they made a similar attempt, and with nearly similar success. They seized men, women, and children, as they could find them in the huts. They then bound their arms, and drove them before them to the canoes. The name of the person, thus discovered on board the Melampus, was Isaac Parker. On inquiring into his character from the master of the division, I found it highly respectable. I found, also, afterwards, that he had sailed with Captain Cook, with great credit to himself, round the world. It was also remarkable that my brother, on seeing him in London, when he went to deliver his evidence, recognised him as having served on board the Monarch man-of-war, and as one of the most exemplary men in that ship.

I returned now in triumph. I had been out only three weeks, and I had found out this extraordinary person, and five respectable witnesses besides. These, added to the three discovered in the last journey, and to those provided before, made us more formidable than at any former period; so that the delay of our opponents, which we had looked upon as so great an evil, proved in the end truly serviceable to our cause.

On going into the committee-room of the House of Commons on my return, I found that the examinations were still going on in the behalf of those who were interested in the continuance of the trade; and they went on beyond the middle of April, when it was considered that they had closed. Mr. Wilberforce moved

accordingly, on the 23rd of the same month, that Captain Thomas Wilson, of the royal navy, and that Charles Berns Wadstrom and Henry Hew Dalrymple, Esqrs., do attend as witnesses on the behalf of the abolition. There was nothing now but clamour from those on the opposite side of the question. They knew well that there were but few members of the House of Commons, who had read the privy council report. They knew, therefore, that if the question were to be decided by evidence, it must be decided by that which their own witnesses had given before parliament. But this was the evidence only on one side. It was certain, therefore, if the decision were to be made upon this basis, that it must be entirely in their favour. Will it then be believed that in an English House of Commons there could be found persons, who could move to prevent the hearing of any other witnesses on this snbject; and, what is more remarkable, that they should charge Mr. Wilberforce, because he proposed the hearing of them, with the intention solely of delay? Yes, such persons were found; but happily only among the friends of the Slave Trade. Mr. Wilberforce, in replying to them, could not help observing that it was rather extraordinary that they, who had occasioned the delay of a whole year, should charge him with that of which they themselves had been so conspicuously guilty. He then commented for some time on the injustice of their motion. He stated, too, that he would undertake to remove from disinterested and unprejudiced persons many of the impressions which had been made by the witnesses against the abolition; and he appealed to the justice and honour of the house in behalf of an injured people; under the hope that they would not allow a decision to be made till they had heard the whole of the case. These observations, however, did not satisfy all those who belonged to the opposite party. Lord Penrhyn contended for a decision without a moment's delay. Mr. Gascoyne relented; and said, he would allow three weeks to the abolitionists, during which their evidence might be heard. At length the debate ended; in the course of which Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox powerfully supported Mr. Wilberforce; when the motion was negatived without any attempt at a division.

The witnesses in behalf of the abolition of the Slave Trade now took possession of the ground which those in favour of it had left. But what was our surprise, when only three of them had been heard, to find that Mr. Norris should come forward as an evidence! This he did to confirm what he had stated to the privy council as to the general question; but he did it more particularly, as it appeared afterwards, in the justification of his own conduct: for the part which he had taken at Liverpool, as it related to me, had become a subject of conversation with many. It was now well known what assistance he had given me there in my pursuit; how he had even furnished me with clauses for a bill for the abolition of the trade; how I had written to him, in consequence of his friendly co-operation, to come up as an evidence in our favour; and how at that moment he had accepted the office of a delegate on the contrary side. The noise which the relation and repetition of these and other circumstances had made, had given him, I believe, considerable pain. His friends, too, had urged some explanation as necessary. But how short-sighted are they who do wrong! By coming forward in this imprudent manner, he fixed the stain only the more indelibly on himself; for he thus imposed upon me the cruel necessity of being examined against him; and this necessity was the more afflicting to me, because I was to be called upon not to state facts relative to the trade, but to destroy his character as an evidence in its support. I was to be called upon, in fact, to explain all those communications which have been stated to have taken place between us on this subject. Glad indeed should I have been to have declined this painful interference. But no one would hear of a refusal. The Bishop of London, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Wilberforce, considered my appearance on this occasion as an imperious duty to the cause of the oppressed. It may be perhaps sufficient to say that I was examined; that Mr. Norris was present all the time; that I was cross-examined by counsel; and that after this time, Mr. Norris seemed to have no ordinary sense of his own degradation; for he never afterwards held up his head, or looked the abolitionists in the face, or acted with energy as a delegate, as on former occasions.

The hearing of evidence continued to go on in behalf of the abolition of the trade. No less than twenty-four witnesses altogether were heard in this session. And here it may not be improper to remark, that during the examination of our own witnesses, as well as the cross-examination of those of our opponents, no counsel were ever employed. Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. William Smith undertook this laborious department; and as they performed it with great ability, so they did it with great liberality towards those who were obliged to come under their notice, in the course of this fiery ordeal.

The bill of Sir William Dolben was now to be renewed. On this occasion the enemies of the abolition became again conspicuous; for on the 26th of May, they availed themselves of a thin house to propose an amendment, by which they increased the number of the slaves to the tonnage of the vessel. They increased it, too, without taking into the account, as had hitherto been done, the extent of the superficies of the vessels which were to carry them. This was the third indecorous attempt against what were only reasonable and expected proceedings in the present session. But their advantage was of no great duration; for the very next day, the amendment was rejected on the report by a majority of ninety-five to sixty-nine, in consequence, principally, of the private exertions of Mr. Pitt. Of this bill, though it was renewed in other years besides the present, I shall say no more in this *History;* because it has nothing to do with the general question. Horrible as it yet left the situation of the poor slaves in their transportation, (which the plate has most abundantly shown,) it was the best bill which could be then obtained; and it answered to a certain degree the benevolent wishes of the worthy baronet who introduced it: for if we could conclude that these voyages were made more comfortable to the injured Africans, in proportion as there was less mortality in them, he had undoubtedly the pleasure of seeing the end, at least partially, obtained; though he must always have felt a great drawback from it, by reflecting that the survivors, however their sufferings might have been a little diminished, were reserved for slavery.

The session was now near its close; and we had the sorrow to find, though we had defeated our opponents in the three instances which have been mentioned, that the tide ran decidedly against us, upon the general question, in the House of Commons. The same statements which had struck so many members with panic in the former sessions, such as that of emancipation, of the ruin and massacre of the planters, and of indemnification to the amount of seventy millions, had been industriously kept up, and this by a personal canvass among them. But this hostile disposition was still unfortunately increased by considerations of another sort. For the witnesses of our opponents had taken their ground first. No less than eleven of them had been examined in the last sessions. In the present, two-thirds of the time had been occupied by others on the same side. Hence the impression upon this ground also was against us; and we had yet had no adequate opportunity of doing it away. A clamour was also raised, where we thought it least likely to have originated. They (the planters), it was said, had produced persons in elevated life, and of the highest character, as witnesses; whereas we had been obliged to take up with those of the lowest condition. This idea was circulated directly after the introduction of Isaac Parker, before mentioned, a simple mariner, and who was now contrasted with the admirals on the other side of the question. This outcry was not only ungenerous, but unconstitutional. It is the glory of the English law, that it has no scale of veracity which it adapts to persons, according to the station which they may be found to occupy in life. In our courts of law, the poor are heard as well as the rich; and if their reputation be fair, and they stand proof against the cross-examinations they undergo, both the judge and the jury must determine the matter in dispute by their evidence. But the House of Commons was now called upon by our opponents, to adopt the preposterous maxim of attaching falsehood to poverty, or of weighing truth by the standard of rank and riches.

But though we felt a considerable degree of pain in finding this adverse disposition among so many members of the Lower House, it was some consolation to us to know that our cause had

not suffered with their constituents,—the people. These were still warmly with us. Indeed, their hatred of the trade had greatly increased. Many circumstances had occurred in this year to promote it. The committee, during my absence in France, had circulated the plate of the slave-ship throughout all England. No one saw it but he was impressed. It spoke to him in a language which was at once intelligible and irresistible. It brought forth the tear of sympathy in behalf of the sufferers, and it fixed their sufferings in his heart. The committee, too, had been particularly vigilant during the whole of the year with respect to the public papers. They had suffered no statement in behalf of those interested in the continuance of the trade to go unanswered. Dr. Dickson, the author of the *Letters on Slavery*, before mentioned, had come forward again with his services on this occasion; and, by his active co-operation with a sub-committee appointed for the purpose, the coast was so well cleared of our opponents, that, though they were seen the next year again, through the medium of the same papers, they appeared only in sudden incursions, as it were, during which they darted a few weapons at us; but they never afterward ventured upon the plain to dispute the matter, inch by inch, or point by point, in an open and manly manner.

But other circumstances occurred to keep up a hatred of the trade among the people in this interval, which, trivial as they were, ought not to be forgotten. The amiable poet Cowper had frequently made the Slave Trade the subject of his contemplation. He had already severely condemned it in his valuable poem *The Task*. But now he had written three little fugitive pieces upon it. Of these, the most impressive was that which he called *The Negro's Complaint*, and of which the following is a copy:—

Forced from home and all its pleasures,
Afric's coast I left forlorn,
To increase a stranger's treasures,
O'er the raging billows borne;
Men from England bought and sold me,
Paid my price in paltry gold;
But, though theirs they have enroll'd me,
Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,
What are England's rights, I ask,
Me from my delights to sever,
Me to torture, me to task?
Fleecy locks and black complexion
Cannot forfeit Nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in black and white the same.

Why did all-creating Nature
Make the plant, for which we toil?
Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
Think, ye masters, iron-hearted,
Lolling at your jovial boards,
Think, how many backs have smarted
For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as you sometimes tell us,
Is there one, who rules on high;
Has he bid you buy and sell us,
Speaking from his throne, the sky?
Ask him, if your knotted scourges,
Fetters, blood-extorting screws,
Are the means, which duty urges
Agents of his will to use?

Hark! he answers. Wild tornadoes,
Strewing yonder sea with wrecks,
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
Are the voice with which he speaks.
He, foreseeing what vexations
Afric's sons should undergo,
Fixed their tyrants' habitations
Where his whirlwinds answer—No.

By our blood in Afric wasted,
Ere our necks received the chain;
By the miseries, which we tasted
Crossing, in your barks, the main;
By our sufferings, since you brought us
To the man-degrading mart,
All-sustained by patience, taught us
Only by a broken heart:

Deem our nation brutes no longer,
Till some reason you shall find
Worthier of regard, and stronger,
Than the colour of our kind.
Slaves of gold! whose sordid dealings
Tarnish all your boasted powers,
Prove that you have human feelings,
Ere you proudly question ours.

This little piece Cowper presented in manuscript to some of his friends in London; and these, conceiving it to contain a powerful appeal in behalf of the injured Africans, joined in printing it. Having ordered it on the finest hot-pressed paper, and folded it up in a small and neat form, they gave it the printed title of *A Subject for Conversation at the Tea-table.* After this, they sent many thousand copies of it in franks into the country. From one it spread to another, till it travelled almost over the whole island. Falling at length into the hands of the musician, it was set to music; and it then found its way into the streets, both of the metropolis and of the country, where it was sung as a ballad; and where it gave a plain account of the subject, with an appropriate feeling, to those who heard it.

Nor was the philanthropy of the late Mr. Wedgwood less instrumental in turning the popular feeling in our favour. He made his own manufactory contribute to this end. He took the seal of the committee, as exhibited in Chap. xx., for his model; and he produced a beautiful cameo, of a less size, of which the ground was a most delicate white, but the Negro, who was seen imploring compassion in the middle of it, was in his own native colour. Mr. Wedgwood made a liberal donation of these, when finished, among his friends. I received from him no less than five hundred of them myself. They, to whom they were sent, did not lay them up in their cabinets, but gave them away likewise. They were soon, like *The Negro's Complaint*, in different parts of the kingdom. Some had them inlaid in gold on the lid of their snuff-boxes. Of the ladies, several wore them in bracelets, and others had them fitted up in an ornamental manner as pins for their hair. At length the taste for wearing them became general; and thus fashion, which usually confines itself to worthless things, was seen for once in the honourable office of promoting the cause of justice, humanity, and freedom.

I shall now only state that the committee took as members within its own body, in the period of time which is included in this chapter, the Reverend Mr. Ormerod, chaplain to the Bishop of London, and Captain James Bowen, of the royal navy; that they elected the Honourable Nathaniel Curzon (afterwards Lord

Scarsdale), Dr. Frossard, of Lyons, and Benjamin Garlike, Esq., then secretary to the English embassy at the Hague, honorary and corresponding members; and that they concluded their annual labours with a suitable report, in which they noticed the extraordinary efforts of our opponents to injure our cause in the following manner:—"In the progress of this business, a powerful combination of interest has been excited against us. The African trader, the planter, and the West India merchant, have united their forces to defend the fortress, in which their supposed treasures lie. Vague calculations and false alarms have been thrown out to the public, in order to show that the constitution, and even the existence, of this free and opulent nation depend on its depriving the inhabitants of a foreign country of those rights and of that liberty which we ourselves so highly and so justly prize. Surely, in the nature of things, and in the order of Providence, it cannot be so. England existed as a great nation long before the African commerce was known amongst us, and it is not to acts of injustice and violence that she owes her present rank in the scale of nations."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Continuation from July, 1790, to July, 1791.—Author travels again throughout the kingdom; object of his journey.—Motion in the House of Commons to resume the hearing of evidence in favour of the abolition; list of all those examined on this side of the question; machinations of interested persons, and cruel circumstances of the times previously to the day of decision.—Motion at length made for stopping all further importation of Slaves from Africa; debates upon it; motion lost.—Resolutions of the committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.—Establishment of the Sierra Leone Company.

It was a matter of deep affliction to us to think, that the crimes and sufferings inseparable from the Slave Trade were to be continued to another year. And yet it was our duty, in the present moment, to acquiesce in the postponement of the question. This postponement was not now for the purpose of delay, but of securing victory. The evidence, on the side of the abolition, was, at the end of the last session, but half finished. It was impossible, for the sake of Africa, that we could have then closed it. No other opportunity might offer in parliament for establishing an indelible record in her favour, if we were to neglect the present. It was our duty, therefore, even to wait to complete it, and to procure such a body of evidence, as should not only bear us out in the approaching contest, but such as, if we were to fail, would bear out our successors also. It was possible, indeed, if the inhabitants of our islands were to improve in civilization, that the poor slaves might experience gradually an improved treatment with it; and so far testimony now might not be testimony for ever: but it was utterly impossible, while the Slave Trade lasted, and the human passions continued to be the same, that there should be any change for the better in Africa; or that any modes, less barbarous, should come into use for procuring slaves. Evidence, therefore, if once collected on this subject, would be evidence for posterity. In the midst of these thoughts another journey occurred to me as necessary for this

purpose; and I prayed, that I might have strength to perform it in the most effectual manner; and that I might be daily impressed, as I travelled along, with the stimulating thought, that the last hope for millions might possibly rest upon my own endeavours.

The committee highly approved of this journey; Mr. Wilberforce saw the absolute necessity of it also, and had prepared a number of questions, with great ingenuity, to be put to such persons as might have information to communicate. These I added to those in the tables, which have been already mentioned, and they made together a valuable collection on the subject.

This tour was the most vexatious of any I had yet undertaken; many still refused to come forward to be examined, and some on the most frivolous pretences, so that I was disgusted, as I journeyed on, to find how little men were disposed to make sacrifices for so great a cause. In one part of it I went over nearly two thousand miles, receiving repeated refusals; I had not secured one witness within this distance; this was truly disheartening. I was subject to the whims and caprice of those whom I solicited on these occasions*; to these I was obliged to accommodate myself. When at Edinburgh, a person who could have given me material information declined seeing me, though he really wished well to the cause; when I had returned southward as far as York, he changed his mind, and he would then see me; I went back that I might not lose him. When I arrived, he would give me only private information. Thus I travelled, backwards and forwards, four hundred miles to no purpose. At another place a circumstance almost similar happened, though with a different issue. I had been for two years writing about a person, whose testimony was important. I had passed once through the town in which he lived, but he would not then see me; I passed through it now, but no entreaties of his friends could make him alter his resolution. He was a man highly respectable as to situation in life, but of considerable vanity. I said therefore to my friend, on leaving the town, You may tell him that I expect to be at Not-

* Ten or twelve of those who were examined, much to their honour, came forward of their own accord.

tingham in a few days, and though it be a hundred and fifty miles distant, I will even come back to see him if he will dine with me on my return. A letter from my friend announced to me, when at Nottingham, that his vanity had been so gratified by the thought of a person coming expressly to visit him from such a distance, that he would meet me according to my appointment; I went back; we dined together; he yielded to my request; I was now repaid, and I returned towards Nottingham in the night. These circumstances I mention, and I feel it right to mention them, that the reader may be properly impressed with the great difficulties we found in collecting a body of evidence in comparison with our opponents. They ought never to be forgotten; for if with the testimony, picked up as it were under all these disadvantages, we carried our object against those who had almost numberless witnesses to command, what must have been the merits of our cause! No person can indeed judge of the severe labour and trials in these journeys. In the present, I was out four months; I was almost over the whole island; I intersected it backwards and forwards both in the night and in the day; I travelled nearly seven thousand miles in this time, and I was able to count upon twenty new and willing evidences.

Having now accomplished my object, Mr. Wilberforce moved on the 4th of February in the House of Commons, that a committee be appointed to examine further witnesses in behalf of the abolition of the Slave Trade. This motion was no sooner made, than Mr. Cawthorne rose, to our great surprise, to oppose it. He took upon himself to decide that the House had heard evidence enough. This indecent motion was not without its advocates. Mr. Wilberforce set forth the injustice of this attempt, and proved, that out of eighty-one days which had been given up to the hearing of evidence, the witnesses against the abolition had occupied no less than fifty-seven. He was strenuously supported by Mr. Burke, Mr. Martin, and other respectable members. At length the debate ended in favour of the original motion, and a committee was appointed accordingly.

The examinations began again on February 7th, and continued till April 5th, when they were finally closed. In this, as

in the former session, Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. William Smith principally conducted them; and indeed it was necessary that they should have been present at these times; for it is perhaps difficult to conceive the illiberal manner in which our witnesses were treated by those on the other side of the question. Men who had left the trade upon principle, and who had come forward, against their apparent interest, to serve the cause of humanity and justice, were looked upon as mercenaries and culprits, or as men of doubtful and suspicious character; they were brow-beaten; unhandsome questions were put to them; some were kept for four days under examination. It was however highly to their honour that they were found in no one instance to prevaricate, nor to waver as to the certainty of their facts.

But this treatment, hard as it was for them to bear, was indeed good for the cause; for, coming thus pure out of the fire, they occasioned their own testimony, when read, to bear stronger marks of truth than that of the generality of our opponents; nor was it less superior when weighed by other considerations. For the witnesses against the abolition were principally interested; they, who were not, had been hospitably received at the planters' tables. The evidence, too, which they delivered, was almost wholly negative. They had not seen such and such evils; but this was no proof that the evils did not exist. The witnesses, on the other hand, who came up in favour of the abolition, had no advantage in making their several assertions. In some instances they came up against their apparent interest, and, to my knowledge, suffered persecution for so doing. The evidence also which they delivered was of a positive nature. They gave an account of specific evils, which had come under their own eyes; these evils were never disproved; they stood therefore on a firm basis, as on a tablet of brass. Engraved there in affirmative characters, a few of them were of more value than all the negative and airy testimony which had been advanced on the other side of the question.

That the public may judge, in some measure, of the respectability of the witnesses in favour of the abolition, and that they may know also to whom Africa is so much indebted for her

deliverance, I shall subjoin their names in the three following lists. The first will contain those who were examined by the privy council only; the second those who were examined by the privy council and the House of Commons also; and the third those who were examined by the House of Commons only.

LIST I.

Andrew Spaarman, physician, botanist, and successor to Linnæus, traveller on discovery in Africa for the king of Sweden.

Rev. Isham Baggs, chaplain for two voyages to Africa in H. M. ship Grampus.

Captain James Bowen, of the royal navy, one voyage to Africa.

Mr. William James, a master in the royal navy, three voyages, as mate of a slave-vessel.

Mr. David Henderson, gunner of H. M. ship Centurion, three voyages to Africa.

Harry Gandy, two voyages to Africa, as captain of a slave-vessel.

Thomas Eldred, two voyages there, as mate.

James Arnold, three voyages there, as surgeon and surgeon's mate.

Thomas Deane, two voyages there, as captain of a wood and ivory ship.

LIST II.

Major-General Rooke, commander of Goree, in Africa.

Henry Hew Dalrymple, Esq., lieutenant of the 75th regiment at Goree, and afterwards in all the West Indian islands.

Thomas Willson, Esq., naval commander at Goree.

John Hills, Esq., captain of H. M. ship Zephyr, on the African station.

Sir George Yonge, two voyages as lieutenant, and two as captain, of a ship of war, on the African station.

Charles Berns Wadstrom, Esq., traveller on discovery in Africa for the king of Sweden.

Rev. John Newton, five voyages to Africa in a slave-vessel, and resident eighteen months there.

Captain John Ashley Hall, in the merchant service, two voyages in a slave-vessel as a mate.

Alexander Falconbridge, four voyages in a slave-vessel as surgeon and surgeon's mate.

Captain John Samuel Smith, of the royal navy, on the West India station.

LIST III.

Anthony Pantaleo How, Esq., employed by government as a botanist in Africa.

Sir Thomas Bolton Thompson, two voyages as a lieutenant, and two as commander of a ship of war on the African station.

Lieutenant John Simpson, of the marines, two voyages in a ship of war on the African station.

Lieutenant Richard Storey, of the royal navy, four years on the slave-employ all over the coast.

Mr. George Miller, gunner of H. M. ship Pegase, one voyage in a slave-ship.

Mr. James Morley, gunner of H. M. ship Medway, six voyages in a slave-ship.
Mr. Henry Ellison, gunner of H. M. ship Resistance, eleven years in the Slave Trade.
Mr. James Towne, carpenter of H. M. ship Syren, two voyages in a slave-ship.
Mr. John Douglas, boatswain of H. M. ship Russell, one voyage in a slave-ship.
Mr. Isaac Parker, shipkeeper of H. M. ship Melampus, two voyages in a slave-ship.
Thomas Trotter, Esq., M.D., one voyage as surgeon of a slave-ship.
Mr. Isaac Wilson, one voyage as surgeon of a slave-ship.
Mr. Ecroyde Claxton, one voyage as surgeon of a slave-ship.
James Kiernan, Esq., resident four years on the banks of the Senegal.
Mr. John Bowman, eleven years in the slave-employ as mate, and as a factor in the interior of Africa.
Mr. William Dove, one voyage for slaves, and afterwards resident in America.
Major-General Tottenham, two years resident in the West Indies.
Captain Giles, 19th regiment, seven years quartered in the West Indies.
Captain Cook, 89th regiment, two years quartered in the West Indies.
Lieutenant Baker Davison, 79th regiment, twelve years quartered in the West Indies.
Captain Hall, of the royal navy, five years on the West India station.
Captain Thomas Lloyd, of the royal navy, one year on the West India station.
Captain Alexander Scott, of the royal navy, one voyage to Africa and the West Indies.
Mr. Ninian Jeffreys, a master in the royal navy, five years mate of a West Indiaman, and for two years afterwards in the islands in a ship-of-war.
Rev. Thomas Gwynn Rees, chaplain of H. M. ship Princess Amelia, in the West Indies.
Rev. Robert Boucher Nicholls, dean of Middleham, many years resident in the West Indies.
Hercules Ross, Esq., twenty-one years a merchant in the West Indies.
Mr. Thomas Clappeson, fifteen years in the West Indies as a wharfinger and pilot.
Mr. Mark Cook, sixteen years in the West Indies, first in the planting business, and then as clerk and schoolmaster.
Mr. Henry Coor, a millwright for fifteen years in the West Indies.
Rev. Mr. Davies, resident fourteen years in the West Indies.
Mr. William Duncan, four years in the West Indies, first as a clerk, and then as an overseer.
Mr. William Fitzmaurice, fifteen years, first as a book-keeper, and then as an overseer, in the West Indies.
Mr. Robert Forster, six years, first in a store, then as second master and pilot of a ship-of-war in the West Indies.
Mr. Robert Ross, twenty-four years, first as a book-keeper, then as an overseer, and afterwards as a planter, in the West Indies.
Mr. John Terry, fourteen years an overseer or manager in the West Indies.
Mr. Matthew Terry, twelve years resident, first as a book-keeper and overseer, then as a land-surveyor in the king's service, and afterwards as a colony-surveyor, in the West Indies.
George Woodward, Esq., an owner and mortgagee of property, and occasionally a resident in the West Indies.

Mr. Joseph Woodward, three years resident in the West Indies.
Henry Botham, Esq., a director of sugar-works both in the East and West Indies.
Mr. John Giles, resident twelve years in the West Indies and America.
J. Harrison, Esq., M.D., twenty-three years resident, in the medical line, in the West Indies and America.
Robert Jackson, Esq., M.D., four years resident in the West Indies in the medical line, after which he joined his regiment, in the same profession, in America.
Thomas Woolrich, Esq., twenty years a merchant in the West Indies, but in the interim was twice in America.
Rev. James Stuart, two years in the West Indies, and twenty in America.
George Baillie, Esq., one year in the West Indies, and twenty-five in America.
William Beverley, Esq., eighteen years in America.
John Clapham, Esq., twenty years in America.
Robert Crew, Esq., a native of America, and long resident there.
John Savage, Esq., forty-six years resident in America.

The evidence having been delivered on both sides, and then printed, it was judged expedient by Mr. Wilberforce, seeing that it filled three folio volumes, to abridge it. This abridgement was made by the different friends of the cause. William Burgh, Esq., of York; Thomas Babington, Esq., of Rothley Temple; the Rev. Thomas Gisborne, of Yoxall Lodge; Mr. Campbell Haliburton, of Edinburgh; George Harrison, with one or two others of the committee, and myself, were employed upon it. The greater share, however, of the labour, fell upon Dr. Dickson. That no misrepresentation of any person's testimony might be made, Matthew Montagu, Esq., and the Honourable E. J. Elliott, members of Parliament, undertook to compare the abridged manuscripts with the original text, and to strike out or correct whatever they thought to be erroneous, and to insert whatever they thought to have been omitted. The committee for the abolition, when the work was finished, printed it at their own expense. Mr. Wilberforce then presented it to the House of Commons, as a faithful abridgement of the whole evidence. Having been received as such, under the guarantee of Mr. Montague and Mr. Elliott, the committee sent it to every individual member of that House.

The book having been thus presented, and a day fixed for the final determination of the question, our feelings became almost insupportable; for we had the mortification to find, that our

cause was going down in estimation, where it was then most important that it should have increased in favour. Our opponents had taken advantage of the long delay which the examination of evidence had occasioned, to prejudice the minds of many of the members of the House of Commons against us. The old arguments of emancipation, massacre, ruin, and indemnification, had been kept up; but, as the day of final decision approached, they had been increased. Such was our situation at this moment, when the current was turned still more powerfully against us by the peculiar circumstances of the times. It was, indeed, the misfortune of this great cause to be assailed by every weapon which could be turned against it. At this time, Thomas Paine had published his *Rights of Man*. This had been widely circulated. At this time, also, the French revolution had existed nearly two years. The people of England had seen, during this interval, a government as it were dissected. They had seen an old constitution taken down, and a new one put up, piece by piece, in its stead. The revolution, therefore, in conjunction with the book in question, had had the effect of producing dissatisfaction among thousands; and this dissatisfaction was growing, so as to alarm a great number of persons of property in the kingdom, as well as the government itself. Now will it be believed that our opponents had the injustice to lay hold of these circumstances, at this critical moment, to give a death-blow to the cause of the abolition? They represented the committee, though it had existed before the French revolution, or the *Rights of Man* were heard of, as a nest of Jacobins; and they held up the cause, sacred as it was, and though it had the support of the minister, as affording an opportunity of meeting for the purpose of overthrowing the state. Their cry succeeded. The very book of the abridgment of the evidence was considered by many members as poisonous as that of the *Rights of Man*. It was too profane for many of them to touch; and they who discarded it, discarded the cause also.

But these were not the only circumstances which were used as means, at this critical moment, to defeat us. News of the revolution, which had commenced in St. Domingo, in consequence

of the disputes between the whites and the people of colour, had, long before this, arrived in England. The horrible scenes which accompanied it, had been frequently published as so many arguments against our cause. In January, new insurrections were announced as having happened in Martinique. The negroes there were described as armed, and the planters as having abandoned their estates for fear of massacre. Early in the month of March, insurrections in the smaller French islands were reported. Every effort was then made to represent these as the effects of the new principles of liberty, and of the cry for abolition. But what should happen, just at this moment, to increase the clamour against us? Nothing less than an insurrection in Dominica.—Yes!—An insurrection in a British island. This was the very event for our opponents. "All the predictions of the planters had now become verified. The horrible massacres were now realizing at home." To give this news still greater effect, a meeting of our opponents was held at the London Tavern. By a letter read there, it appeared that "the ruin of Dominica was now at hand." Resolutions were voted, and a memorial presented to government, "immediately to despatch such a military force to the different islands, as might preserve the whites from destruction, and keep the negroes in subjection during the present critical state of the slave bill." This alarm was kept up till the 7th of April, when another meeting took place, to receive the answer of government to the memorial. It was there resolved that, "as it was too late to send troops to the islands, the best way of preserving them would be to bring the question of the Slave Trade to an immediate issue; and that it was the duty of the government, if they regarded the safety of the islands, to oppose the abolition of it." Accounts of all these proceedings were inserted in the public papers. It is needless to say that they were injurious to our cause. Many looked upon the abolitionists as monsters. They became also terrified themselves. The idea with these was, that unless the discussion on this subject was terminated, all would be lost. Thus, under a combination of effects, arising from the publication of the *Rights of Man*, the rise and progress of the French revolution, and the insurrections of the negroes in

the different islands, no one of which events had anything to do with the abolition of the Slave Trade, the current was turned against us; and in this unfavourable frame of mind many members of parliament went into the House, on the day fixed for the discussion, to discharge their duty with respect to this great question.

On the 18th of April, Mr. Wilberforce made his motion. He began by expressing a hope, that the present debate, instead of exciting asperity and confirming prejudice, would tend to produce a general conviction of the truth of what in fact was incontrovertible; that the abolition of the Slave Trade was indispensably required of them, not only by morality and religion, but by sound policy. He stated that he should argue the matter from evidence. He adverted to the character, situation, and means of information of his own witnesses; and having divided his subject into parts, the first of which related to the manner of reducing the natives of Africa to a state of slavery, he handled it in the following manner:—

He would begin, he said, with the first boundary of the trade. Captain Wilson and Captain Hills, of His Majesty's navy, and Mr. Dalrymple, of the land service, had concurred in stating, that in the country contiguous to the river Senegal, when slave-ships arrived there, armed parties were regularly sent out in the evening, who scoured the country, and brought in their prey. The wretched victims were to be seen in the morning bound back to back in the huts on shore, whence they were conveyed, tied hand and foot, to the slave-ships. The design of these ravages was obvious, because, when the Slave Trade was stopped, they ceased. Mr. Kiernan spoke of the constant depredations by the Moors to procure slaves. Mr. Wadstrom confirmed them. The latter gentleman showed also that they were excited by presents of brandy, gunpowder, and such other incentives; and that they were not only carried on by one community against another, but that the kings were stimulated to practise them in their territories, and on their own subjects: and in one instance a chieftain, who, when intoxicated, could not resist the demands of the slave-merchants, had expressed, in a moment of reason, a due sense of

his own crime, and had reproached his Christian seducers. Abundant also were the instances of private rapine. Individuals were kidnapped, whilst in their fields and gardens. There was an universal feeling of distrust and apprehension there. The natives never went any distance from home without arms; and when Captain Wilson asked them the reason of it, they pointed to a slave-ship then lying within sight.

On the windward coast, it appeared from Lieutenant Story and Mr. Bowman, that the evils just mentioned existed, if possible, in a still higher degree. They had seen the remains of villages, which had been burnt, whilst the fields of corn were still standing beside them, and every other trace of recent desolation. Here an agent was sent to establish a settlement in the country, and to send to the ships such slaves as he might obtain. The orders he received from his captain were, that "he was to encourage the chieftains by brandy and gunpowder to go to war, to make slaves." This he did. The chieftains performed their part in return. The neighbouring villages were surrounded and set on fire in the night. The inhabitants were seized when making their escape; and, being brought to the agent, were by him forwarded to his principal on the coast. Mr. How, a botanist in the service of Government, stated, that on the arrival of an order for slaves from Cape Coast Castle, while he was there, a native chief immediately sent forth armed parties, who brought in a supply of all descriptions in the night.

But he would now mention one or two instances of another sort, and these merely on account of the conclusion, which was to be drawn from them. When Captain Hills was in the river Gambia, he mentioned accidentally to a Black pilot, who was in the boat with him, that he wanted a cabin-boy. It so happened that some youths were then on the shore with vegetables to sell. The pilot beckoned to them to come on board; at the same time giving Captain Hills to understand, that he might take his choice of them; and when Captain Hills rejected the proposal with indignation, the pilot seemed perfectly at a loss to account for his warmth; and drily observed, that the slave-captains would not have been so scrupulous. Again, when General Rooke com-

manded at Goree, a number of the natives, men, women, and children, came to pay him a friendly visit. All was gaiety and merriment. It was a scene to gladden the saddest, and to soften the hardest, heart. But a slave-captain was not so soon thrown off his guard. Three English barbarians of this description had the audacity jointly to request the general, to seize the whole unsuspicious multitude and sell them. For this they alleged the precedent of a former governor. Was not this request a proof of the frequency of such acts of rapine? for how familiar must such have been to slave-captains, when three of them dared to carry a British officer of rank such a flagitious proposal! This would stand in the place of a thousand instances. It would give credibility to every other act of violence stated in the evidence, however enormous it might appear.

But he would now have recourse for a moment to circumstantial evidence. An adverse witness, who had lived on the Gold Coast, had said that the only way in which children could be enslaved, was by whole families being sold when the principals had been condemned for witchcraft. But he said at the same time, that few were convicted of this crime, and that the younger part of a family in these cases was sometimes spared. But if this account were true, it would follow that the children in the slave-vessels would be few indeed. But it had been proved, that the usual proportion of these was never less than a fourth of the whole cargo on the coast, and also, that the kidnapping of children was very prevalent there.

All these atrocities, he said, were fully substantiated by the evidence; and here he should do injustice to his cause, if he were not to make a quotation from the speech of Mr. B. Edwards in the Assembly of Jamaica, who, though he was hostile to his propositions, had yet the candour to deliver himself in the following manner there. "I am persuaded," says he, "that Mr. Wilberforce has been rightly informed as to the manner in which slaves are generally procured. The intelligence I have collected from my own negroes abundantly confirms his account; and I have not the smallest doubt, that in Africa the effects of this trade are precisely such as he has represented them. The whole,

or the greatest part, of that immense continent is a field of warfare and desolation; a wilderness, in which the inhabitants are wolves towards each other. That this scene of oppression, fraud, treachery, and bloodshed, if not originally occasioned, is in part (I will not say wholly) upheld by the Slave Trade, I dare not dispute. Every man in the Sugar Islands may be convinced that it is so, who will enquire of any African negroes, on their first arrival, concerning the circumstances of their captivity. The assertion that it is otherwise, is mockery and insult."

But it was not only by acts of outrage that the Africans were brought into bondage. The very administration of justice was turned into an engine for that end. The smallest offence was punished by a fine equal to the value of a slave. Crimes were also fabricated; false accusations were resorted to; and persons were sometimes employed to seduce the unwary into practices with a view to the conviction and the sale of them.

It was another effect of this trade, that it corrupted the morals of those who carried it on. Every fraud was used to deceive the ignorance of the natives by false weights and measures, adulterated commodities, and other impositions of a like sort. These frauds were even acknowledged by many who had themselves practised them, in obedience to the orders of their superiors. For the honour of the mercantile character of the country, such a traffic ought immediately to be suppressed.

Yet these things, however clearly proved by positive testimony, by the concession of opponents, by particular inference, by general reasoning, by the most authentic histories of Africa, by the experience of all countries and of all ages,—these things, and (what was still more extraordinary) even the possibility of them, were denied by those who had been brought forward on the other side of the question. These, however, were chiefly persons who had been trading-governors of forts in Africa, or who had long commanded ships in the Slave Trade. As soon as he knew the sort of witnesses which was to be called against him, he had been prepared to expect much prejudice. But his expectations had been greatly surpassed by the testimony they had given. He did not mean to impeach their private characters, but they certainly

showed themselves under the influence of such gross prejudices, as to render them incompetent judges of the subject they came to elucidate. They seemed (if he might so say) to be enveloped by a certain atmosphere of their own; and to see, as it were, through a kind of African medium. Every object which met their eyes came distorted and turned from its true direction. Even the declarations, which they made on other occasions, seemed wholly strange to them. They sometimes not only forgot what they had seen, but what they had said; and when to one of them his own testimony to the privy council was read, he mistook it for that of another, whose evidence he declared to be "the merest burlesque in the world."

But the House must be aware that there was not only an African medium, but an African logic. It seemed to be an acknowledged axiom in this, that every person who offered a slave for sale had a right to sell him, however fraudulently he might have obtained him. This had been proved by the witnesses who opposed him. "It would have stopped my trade," said one of them, "to have asked the broker how he came by the person he was offering me for sale."—"We always suppose," said another, "the broker has a right to sell the person he offers us."—"I never heard of such a question being asked," said a third; "a man would be thought a fool who should put such a question."—He hoped the House would see the practical utility of this logic. It was the key-stone which held the building together. By means of it, slave-captains might traverse the whole coast of Africa, and see nothing but equitable practices. They could not, however, be wholly absolved, even if they availed themselves of this principle to its fullest extent; for they had often committed depredations themselves; especially when they were passing by any part of the coast, where they did not mean to continue or to go again. Hence it was (as several captains of the navy and others had declared on their examination), that the natives, when at sea in their canoes, would never come near the men-of-war, till they knew them to be such. But finding this, and that they were not slave-vessels, they laid aside their fears, and came and continued on board with unsuspecting cheerfulness.

With respect to the miseries of the Middle Passage, he had said so much on a former occasion, that he would spare the feelings of the committee as much as he could. He would therefore simply state that the evidence, which was before them, confirmed all those scenes of wretchedness which he had then described: the same suffering from a state of suffocation, by being crowded together; the same dancing in fetters; the same melancholy singing; the same eating by compulsion; the same despair; the same insanity; and all the other abominations which characterized the trade., New instances however had occurred, where these wretched men had resolved on death to terminate their woes. Some had destroyed themselves by refusing sustenance, in spite of threats and punishments. Others had thrown themselves into the sea; and more than one, when in the act of drowning, were seen to wave their hands in triumph, "exulting" (to use the words of an eye-witness) "that they had escaped." Yet these and similar things, when viewed through the African medium he had mentioned, took a different shape and colour. Captain Knox, an adverse witness, had maintained, that slaves lay during the night in tolerable comfort. And yet he confessed, that in a vessel of one hundred and twenty tons, in which he had carried two hundred and ninety slaves, the latter had not all of them room to lie on their backs. How comfortably, then, must they have lain in his subsequent voyages! for he carried afterwards, in a vessel of a hundred and eight tons, four hundred and fifty; and in a vessel of one hundred and fifty tons, no less than six hundred slaves. Another instance of African deception was to be found in the testimony of Captain Frazer, one of the most humane captains in the trade. It had been said of him, that he had held hot coals to the mouth of a slave, to compel him to eat. He was questioned on this point; but not admitting, in the true spirit of African logic, that he who makes another commit a crime is guilty of it himself, he denied the charge indignantly, and defied a proof. But it was said to him, "Did you never order such a thing to be done?" His reply was, "Being sick in my cabin, I was informed that a man-slave would neither eat, drink, nor speak. I desired the mate and

surgeon to try to persuade him to speak. I desired that the slaves might try also. When I found he was still obstinate, not knowing whether it was from sulkiness or insanity, I ordered a person to present him with a piece of fire in one hand, and a piece of yam in the other, and to tell me what effect this had upon him. I learnt that he took the yam and began to eat it, but he threw the fire overboard." Such was his own account of the matter. This was eating by duresse, if anything could be called so. The captain, however, triumphed in his expedient; and concluded by telling the committee, that he sold this very slave at Grenada for forty pounds. Mark here the moral of the tale, and learn the nature and the cure of sulkiness.

But upon whom did the cruelties, thus arising out of the prosecution of this barbarous traffic, fall? Upon a people with feeling and intellect like ourselves. One witness had spoken of the acuteness of their understandings; another, of the extent of their memories; a third, of their genius for commerce; a fourth, of their proficiency in manufactures at home. Many had admired their gentle and peaceable disposition, their cheerfulness, and their hospitality. Even they who were nominally slaves in Africa lived a happy life. A witness against the abolition had described them as sitting and eating with their masters in the true style of patriarchal simplicity and comfort. Were these, then, a people incapable of civilization? The argument that they were an inferior species had been proved to be false.

He would now go to a new part of the subject. An opinion had gone forth that the abolition of the trade would be the ruin of the West India Islands. He trusted he should prove that the direct contrary was the truth; though, had he been unable to do this, it would have made no difference as to his own vote. In examining, however, this opinion, he should exclude the subject of the cultivation of new lands by fresh importations of slaves. The impolicy of this measure, apart from its inhumanity, was indisputably clear. Let the committee consider the dreadful mortality which attended it. Let them look to the evidence of Mr. Woolrich, and there see a contrast drawn between the slow, but sure, progress of cultivation carried on in the natural way,

and the attempt to force improvements, which, however flattering the prospect at first, soon produced a load of debt, and inextricable embarrassments. He might even appeal to the statements of the West Indians themselves, who allowed that more than twenty millions were owing to the people of this country, to show that no system could involve them so deeply as that on which they had hitherto gone. But he would refer them to the accounts of Mr. Irving, as contained in the evidence. Waving, then, the consideration of this part of the subject, the opinion in question must have arisen from a notion, that the stock of slaves, now in the islands, could not be kept up by propagation; but that it was necessary, from time to time, to recruit them with imported Africans. In direct refutation of this position he should prove: First, that, in the condition and treatment of the Negroes, there were causes sufficient to afford us reason to expect a considerable decrease, but particularly that their increase had not been a serious object of attention: Secondly, that this decrease was in fact, notwithstanding, very trifling; or rather, he believed, he might declare it had now actually ceased: and, Thirdly, he should urge many direct and collateral facts and arguments, constituting on the whole an irresistible proof, that even a rapid increase might henceforth be expected.

He wished to treat the West Indians with all possible candour; but he was obliged to confess, in arguing upon these points, that whatever splendid instances there might be of kindness towards their slaves, there were some evils of almost universal operation, which were necessarily connected with the system of slavery. Above all, the state of degradation to which they were reduced, deserved to be noticed, as it produced an utter inattention to them as moral agents; they were kept at work under the whip like cattle; they were left totally ignorant of morality and religion; there was no regular marriage among them; hence promiscuous intercourse, early prostitution, and excessive drinking, were material causes of their decrease. With respect to the instruction of the slaves in the principles of religion, the happiest effects had resulted, particularly in Antigua, where, under the Moravians and Methodists, they had so far profited, that the

planters themselves confessed their value as property had been raised one-third by their increased habits of regularity and industry.

Whatever might have been said to the contrary, it was plainly to be inferred from the evidence that the slaves were not protected by law. Colonial statutes had indeed been passed, but they were a dead letter; since, however ill they were treated, they were not considered as having a right to redress. An instance of astonishing cruelty by a Jew had been mentioned by Mr. Ross; it was but justice to say, that the man was held in detestation for it, but yet no one had ever thought of calling him to a legal account. Mr. Ross conceived a master had a right to punish his slave in whatever manner he might think proper; the same was declared by numberless other witnesses. Some instances indeed had lately occurred of convictions. A master had wantonly cut the mouth of a child, of six months old, almost from ear to ear. But did not the verdict of the jury show, that the doctrine of calling masters to an account was entirely novel, as it only pronounced him "Guilty, subject to the opinion of the court, if immoderate correction of a slave by his master be a crime indictable!" The court determined in the affirmative; and what was the punishment of this barbarous act?—A fine of forty shillings currency, equivalent to about twenty-five shillings sterling.

The slaves were but ill off in point of medical care. Sometimes four or five, and even eight or nine thousand of them, were under the care of one medical man; which, dispersed on different and distant estates, was a greater number than he could possibly attend to.

It was also in evidence that they were in general under-fed; they were supported partly by the produce of their own provision-ground, and partly by an allowance of flour and grain from their masters. In one of the islands, where provision-ground did not answer one year in three, the allowance to a working Negro was but from five to nine pints of grain per week: in Dominica, where it never failed, from six to seven quarts: in Nevis and St. Christopher's, where there was no provision-ground, it was but eleven pints. Add to this, that it might be still less, as the circum-

stances of their masters might become embarrassed, and in this case both an abridgment of their food and an increase of their labour would follow.

But the great cause of the decrease of the slaves was in the non-residence of the planters. Sir George Yonge, and many others, had said, they had seen the slaves treated in a manner which their owners would have resented if they had known it. Mr. Orde spoke in the strongest terms of the misconduct of managers. The fact was, that these in general sought to establish their characters by producing large crops at a small immediate expense; too little considering how far the slaves might suffer from ill-treatment and excessive labour. The pursuit of such a system was a criterion for judging of their characters, as both Mr. Long and Mr. Ottley had confessed.

But he must contend, in addition to this, that the object of keeping up the stock of slaves by breeding had never been seriously attended to. For this he might appeal both to his own witnesses and to those of his opponents, but he would only notice one fact. It was remarkable that, when owners and managers were asked about the produce of their estates, they were quite at home as to the answer; but when they were asked about the proportion of their male and female slaves, and their infants, they knew little about the matter. Even medical men were adepts in the art of planting, but when they were asked the latter questions, as connected with breeding and rearing, they seemed quite amazed, and could give no information upon the subject of them.

Persons, however, of great respectability had been called as witnesses who had not seen the treatment of the Negroes as he had now described it. He knew what was due to their characters, but yet he must enter a general protest against their testimony. "I have often," says Mr. Ross, "attended both governors and admirals upon tours in the island of Jamaica, but it was not likely that these should see much distress upon these occasions. The white people and drivers would take care not to harrow up the feelings of strangers of distinction by the exercise of the whip, or the infliction of punishments, at that particular time; and, even if there were any disgusting objects, it was

natural to suppose that they would then remove them." But in truth these gentlemen had given proofs that they were under the influence of prejudice. Some of them had declared the abolition would ruin the West Indies; but this, it was obvious, must depend upon the practicability of keeping up the stock without African supplies; and yet, when they were questioned upon this point, they knew nothing about it; hence they had formed a conclusion without premises. Their evidence, too, extended through a long series of years; they had never seen one instance of ill-treatment in the time, and yet, in the same breath, they talked of the amended situation of the slaves, and that they were now far better off than formerly. One of them, to whom his country owed much, stated that a master had been sentenced to death for the murder of his own slave; but his recollection must have failed him, for the murder of a slave was not then a capital crime. A respectable governor also had delivered an opinion to the same effect; but, had he looked into the statute-book of the island, he would have found his error.

It had been said that the slaves were in a better state than the peasantry of this country; but when the question was put to Mr. Ross, did he not answer, "that he would not insult the latter by a comparison?"

It had been said again, that the Negroes were happier as slaves than they would be if they were to be made free. But how was this reconcilable with facts? If a Negro under extraordinary circumstances had saved money enough, did he not always purchase his release from this situation of superior happiness by the sacrifice of his last shilling? Was it not also notorious, that the greatest reward which a master thought he could bestow upon his slave for long and faithful services was his freedom.

It had been said again, that Negroes, when made free, never returned to their own country. But was not the reason obvious? If they could even reach their own homes in safety, their kindred and connexions might be dead. But would they subject themselves to be kidnapped again; to be hurried once more on board a slave-ship, and again to endure and survive the horrors of the

passage? Yet the love of their native country had been proved beyond a doubt; many of the witnesses had heard them talk of it in terms of the strongest affection. Acts of suicide, too, were frequent in the islands, under the notion that these afforded them the readiest means of getting home. Conformably with this, Captain Wilson had maintained that the funerals, which in Africa were accompanied with lamentations and cries of sorrow, were attended, in the West Indies with every mark of joy.

He had now, he said, made good his first proposition—that in the condition of the slaves there were causes, which should lead us to expect, that there would be a considerable decrease among them. This decrease in the island of Jamaica was but trifling, or, rather, it had ceased some years ago; and if there was a decrease, it was only on the imported slaves. It appeared from the privy council report, that from 1698 to 1730 the decrease was three and a-half per cent.; from 1730 to 1755 it was two and a-half per cent.; from 1755 to 1768 it was lessened to one and three-quarters; and from 1768 to 1788 it was not more than one per cent. This last decrease was not greater than could be accounted for from hurricanes and consequent famines, and from the number of imported Africans who perished in the seasoning. The latter was a cause of mortality, which, it was evident, would cease with the importations. This conclusion was confirmed in part by Dr. Anderson, who, in his testimony to the Assembly of Jamaica, affirmed that there was a considerable increase on the properties of the island, and particularly in the parish in which he resided.

He would now proceed to establish his second proposition, that from henceforth a very considerable increase might be expected. This he might support by a close reasoning upon the preceding facts; but the testimony of his opponents furnished him with sufficient evidence. He could show, that wherever the slaves were treated better than ordinary, there was uniformly an increase in their number. Look at the estates of Mr. Willock, Mr. Ottley, Sir Ralph Payne, and others. In short, he should weary the committee, if he were to enumerate the instances of

plantations, which were stated in the evidence to have kept up their numbers only from a little variation in their treatment. A remedy also had been lately found for a disorder, by which vast numbers of infants had been formerly swept away. Mr. Long, also, had laid it down, that whenever the slaves should bear a certain proportion to the produce, they might be expected to keep up their numbers; but this proportion they now exceeded. The Assembly of Jamaica had given it also as their opinion, "that when once the sexes should become nearly equal in point of number, there was no reason to suppose, that the increase of the Negroes by generation would fall short of the natural increase of the labouring poor in Great Britain." But the inequality, here spoken of, could only exist in the case of the African Negroes, of whom more males were imported than females; and this inequality would be done away soon after the trade should cease.

But the increase of the Negroes, where their treatment was better than ordinary, was confirmed in the evidence by instances in various parts of the world. From one end of the continent of America to the other, their increase had been undeniably established; and this to a prodigious extent, though they had to contend with the severe cold of the winter, and in some parts with noxious exhalations in the summer. This was the case, also, in the settlement of Bencoolen in the East Indies. It appeared from the evidence of Mr. Botham, that a number of Negroes, who had been imported there in the same disproportion of the sexes as in West Indian cargoes, and who lived under the same disadvantages, as in the islands, of promiscuous intercourse and general prostitution, began, after they had been settled a short time, annually to increase.

But to return to the West Indies.—A slave-ship had been, many years ago, wrecked near St. Vincent's. The slaves on board, who escaped to the island, were without necessaries; and, besides, were obliged to maintain a war with the native Caribbs: yet they soon multiplied to an astonishing number; and, according to Mr. Ottley, they were now on the increase. From Sir John Dalrymple's evidence it appeared that the domestic slaves in Jamaica, who were less worked than those in the field,

increased; and from Mr. Long, that the free Blacks and Mulattoes there increased also.

But there was an instance which militated against these facts (and the only one in the evidence), which he would now examine. Sir Archibald Campbell had heard that the Maroons in Jamaica, in the year 1739, amounted to three thousand men fit to carry arms. This supposed their whole number to have been about twelve thousand; but in the year 1782, after a real muster by himself, he found, to his great astonishment, that the fighting men did not then amount to three hundred. Now the fact was, that Sir Archibald Campbell's first position was founded upon rumour only, and was not true; for, according to Mr. Long, the Maroons were actually numbered in 1749, when they amounted to about six hundred and sixty in all, having only a hundred and fifty men fit to carry arms. Hence, if when mustered by Sir Archibald Campbell he found three hundred fighting men, they must from 1749 to 1782 have actually doubled their population.

Was it possible, after these instances, to suppose that the Negroes could not keep up their numbers, if their natural increase were made a subject of attention? The reverse was proved by sound reasoning. It had been confirmed by unquestionable facts. It had been shown, that they had increased in every situation, where there was the slightest circumstance in their favour. Where there had been any decrease, it was stated to be trifling; though no attention appeared to have been paid to the subject. This decrease had been gradually lessening; and whenever a single cause of it had been removed (many still remaining), it had altogether ceased. Surely these circumstances formed a body of proof which was irresistible.

He would now speak of the consequences of the abolition of the Slave Trade in other points of view; and first, as to its effects upon our marine. An abstract of the Bristol and Liverpool muster-rolls had been just laid before the House. It appeared from this, that in three hundred and fifty slave-vessels, having on board twelve thousand two hundred and sixty-three persons, two thousand six hundred and forty-three were lost in

twelve months; whereas in four hundred and sixty-two West Indiamen, having on board seven thousand six hundred and forty persons, one hundred and eighteen only were lost in seven months. This rather exceeded the losses stated by Mr. Clarkson. For their barbarous usage on board these ships, and for their sickly and abject state in the West Indies, he would appeal to Governor Parry's letter; to the evidence of Mr. Ross; to the assertion of Mr. B. Edwards, an opponent; and to the testimony of Captains Sir George Yonge and Thompson, of the Royal Navy. He would appeal, also, to what Captain Hall, of the Navy, had given in evidence. This gentleman, after the action of the 12th of April, impressed thirty hands from a slave-vessel, whom he selected with the utmost care from a crew of seventy; and he was reprimanded by his admiral, though they could scarcely get men to bring home the prizes, for introducing such wretches to communicate disorders to the fleet. Captain Smith of the Navy had also declared, that when employed to board Guineamen to impress sailors, although he had examined near twenty vessels, he never was able to get more than two men, who were fit for service; and these turned out such inhuman fellows, although good seamen, that he was obliged to dismiss them from the ship.

But he hoped the committee would attend to the latter part of the assertion of Captain Smith. Yes: this trade, while it injured the constitutions of our sailors, debased their morals. Of this, indeed, there was a barbarous illustration in the evidence. A slave-ship had struck on some shoals, called the Morant Keys, a few leagues from the east end of Jamaica. The crew landed in their boats, with arms and provisions, leaving the slaves on board in their irons. This happened in the night. When morning came, it was discovered that the Negroes had broken their shackles, and were busy in making rafts; upon which afterwards they placed the women and children. The men attended upon the latter, swimming by their side, whilst they drifted to the island where the crew were. But what was the sequel? From an apprehension that the Negroes would consume the water and provisions, which had been landed, the crew resolved

to destroy them as they approached the shore. They killed between three and four hundred. Out of the whole cargo only thirty-three were saved, who, on being brought to Kingston, were sold. It would, however, be to no purpose, he said, to relieve the Slave Trade from this act of barbarity. The story of the Morant Keys was paralleled by that of Captain Collingwood; and were you to get rid of these, another, and another, would still present itself, to prove the barbarous effects of this trade on the moral character.

But of the miseries of the trade there was no end. Whilst he had been reading out of the evidence the story of the Morant Keys, his eye had but glanced on the opposite page, and it met another circumstance of horror. This related to what were called the refuse-slaves. Many people in Kingston were accustomed to speculate in the purchase of those, who were left after the first day's sale. They then carried them out into the country, and retailed them. Mr. Ross declared, that he had seen these landed in a very wretched state, sometimes in the agonies of death, and sold as low as for a dollar, and that he had known several expire in the piazzas of the vendue-master. The bare description superseded the necessity of any remark. Yet these were the familiar incidents of the Slave Trade.

But he would go back to the seamen. He would mention another cause of mortality, by which many of them lost their lives. In looking over Lloyd's list, no less than six vessels were cut off by the irritated natives in one year, and the crews massacred. Such instances were not unfrequent. In short, the history of this commerce was written throughout in characters of blood.

He would next consider the effects of the abolition on those places where it was chiefly carried on. But would the committee believe, after all the noise which had been made on this subject, that the Slave Trade composed but a thirtieth part of the export trade of Liverpool, and that of the trade of Bristol it constituted a still less proportion? For the effects of the abolition on the general commerce of the kingdom, he would refer them to Mr. Irving; from whose evidence it would appear, that the medium value of the British manufactures, exported to Africa, amounted

only to between four and five hundred thousand pounds annually. This was but a trifling sum. Surely the superior capital, ingenuity, application, and integrity of the British manufacturer would command new markets for the produce of his industry, to an equal amount, when this should be no more. One branch, however, of our manufactures, he confessed, would suffer from the abolition; and that was the manufacture of gunpowder; of which the nature of our connexion with Africa drew from us as much as we exported to all the rest of the world besides.

He hastened, however, to another part of the argument. Some had said, "We wish to put an end to the Slave Trade, but we do not approve of your mode. Allow more time. Do not displease the legislatures of the West India islands. It is by them that those laws must be passed, and enforced, which will secure your object." Now he was directly at issue with these gentlemen. He could show, that the abolition was the only certain mode of amending the treatment of the slaves, so as to secure their increase: and that the mode which had been offered to him, was at once inefficacious and unsafe. In the first place, how could any laws, made by these legislatures, be effectual, whilst the evidence of Negroes was in no case admitted against White men? What was the answer from Grenada? Did it not state, "that they who were capable of cruelty, would in general be artful enough to prevent any but slaves from being witnesses of the fact?" Hence it had arisen, that when positive laws had been made, in some of the islands, for the protection of the slaves, they had been found almost a dead letter. Besides, by what law would you enter into every man's domestic concerns, and regulate the interior economy of his house and plantation? This would be something more than a general excise. Who would endure such a law? And yet on all these and innumerable other minutiæ must depend the protection of the slaves, their comforts, and the probability of their increase. It was universally allowed, that the Code Noir had been utterly neglected in the French islands, though there was an officer appointed by the crown to see it enforced. The provisions of the Directorio had been but of little more avail in the Portuguese settlements, or the institution of a

Protector of the Indians, in those of the Spaniards. But what degree of protection the slaves would enjoy might be inferred from the admission of a gentleman, by whom this very plan of regulation had been recommended, and who was himself no ordinary person, but a man of discernment and legal resources. He had proposed a limitation of the number of lashes to be given by the master or overseer for one offence. But, after all, he candidly confessed, that his proposal was not likely to be useful, while the evidence of slaves continued inadmissible against their masters. But he could even bring testimony to the inefficacy of such regulations. A wretch in Barbados had chained a Negro girl to the floor, and flogged her till she was nearly expiring. Captain Cook and Major Fitch, hearing her cries, broke open the door and found her. The wretch retreated from their resentment, but cried out exultingly, "that he had only given her thirty-nine lashes (the number limited by law) at any one time; and that he had only inflicted this number three times since the beginning of the night," adding, "that he would prosecute them for breaking open his door; and that he would flog her to death for all any one, if he pleased; and that he would give her the fourth thirty-nine before morning."

But this plan of regulation was not only inefficacious, but unsafe. He entered his protest against the fatal consequences which might result from it. The Negroes were creatures like ourselves; but they were uninformed, and their moral character was debased. Hence they were unfit for civil rights. To use these properly they must be gradually restored to that level, from which they had been so unjustly degraded. To allow them an appeal to the laws, would be to awaken in them a sense of the dignity of their nature. The first return of life, after a swoon, was commonly a convulsion, dangerous at once to the party himself and to all around him. You should first prepare them for the situation, and not bring the situation to them. To be under the protection of the law was in fact to be a freeman; and to unite slavery and freedom in one condition was impracticable. The abolition, on the other hand, was exactly such an agent as the case required. All hopes of supplies from the coast being cut off, breeding would

henceforth become a serious object of attention; and the care of this, as including better clothing, and feeding, and milder discipline, would extend to innumerable particulars, which an act of assembly could neither specify nor enforce. The horrible system, too, which many had gone upon, of working out their slaves in a few years, and recruiting their gangs with imported Africans, would receive its death-blow from the abolition of the trade. The opposite would force itself on the most unfeeling heart. Ruin would stare a man in the face, if he were not to conform to it. The non-resident owners would then express themselves in the terms of Sir Philip Gibbs, "that he should consider it as the fault of his manager, if he were not to keep up the number of his slaves." This reasoning concerning the different tendencies of the two systems was self-evident; but facts were not wanting to confirm it. Mr. Long had remarked, that all the insurrections and suicides in Jamaica had been found among the imported slaves, who, not having lost the consciousness of civil rights, which they had enjoyed in their own country, could not brook the indignities to which they were subjected in the West Indies. An instance in point was afforded also by what had lately taken place in the island of Dominica. The disturbance there had been chiefly occasioned by some runaway slaves from the French islands. But what an illustration was it of his own doctrine to say, that the slaves of several persons, who had been treated with kindness, were not among the number of the insurgents on that occasion!

But when persons coolly talked of putting an end to the Slave Trade through the medium of the West India legislatures, and of gradual abolition, by means of regulations, they surely forgot the miseries which this horrid traffic occasioned in Africa during every moment of its continuance. This consideration was conclusive with him, when called upon to decide whether the Slave Trade should be tolerated for a while, or immediately abolished. The divine law against murder was absolute and unqualified. Whilst we were ignorant of all these things, our sanction of them might, in some measure, be pardoned. But now, when our eyes were opened, could we tolerate them for a moment, unless we were ready at once to determine,

that gain should be our god, and, like the heathens of old, were prepared to offer up human victims at the shrine of our idolatry?

This consideration precluded also the giving heed for an instant to another plea, namely, that if we were to abolish the trade it would be proportionably taken up by other nations. But, whatever other nations did, it became Great Britain, in every point of view, to take a forward part. One half of this guilty commerce had been carried on by her subjects. As we had been great in our crime we should be early in our repentance. If Providence had showered his blessings upon us in unparalleled abundance, we should show ourselves grateful for them by rendering them subservient to the purposes for which they were intended. There would be a day of retribution, wherein we should have to give an account of all those talents, faculties, and opportunities with which we have been intrusted. Let it not then appear that our superior power had been employed to oppress our fellow-creatures, and our superior light to darken the creation of God. He could not but look forward with delight to the happy prospects which opened themselves to his view in Africa, from the abolition of the Slave Trade, when a commerce, justly deserving that name, should be established with her; not like that, falsely so called, which now subsisted, and which all who were interested for the honour of the commercial character (though there were no superior principle) should hasten to disavow. Had this trade indeed been ever so profitable, his decision would have been in no degree affected by that consideration. "Here's the smell of blood on the hand still, and all the perfumes of Arabia cannot sweeten it."

He doubted whether it was not almost an act of degrading condescension to stoop to discuss the question in the view of commercial interest. On this ground, however, he was no less strong than on every other. Africa abounded with productions of value, which she would gladly exchange for our manufactures, when these were not otherwise to be obtained: and to what an extent her demand might then grow, exceeded almost the powers of computation. One instance already existed of a native king, who being debarred by his religion the use of spirituous liquors, and therefore not feeling the irresistible temptation to acts of rapine

which they afforded to his countrymen, had abolished the Slave Trade throughout all his dominions, and was encouraging an honest industry.

For his own part, he declared that, interested as he might be supposed to be in the final event of the question, he was comparatively indifferent as to the present decision of the House upon it. Whatever they might do, the people of Great Britain, he was confident, would abolish the Slave Trade when, as would then soon happen, its injustice and cruelty should be fairly laid before them. It was a nest of serpents, which would never have existed so long but for the darkness in which they lay hid. The light of day would now be let in on them, and they would vanish from the sight. For himself, he declared he was engaged in a work which he would never abandon; the consciousness of the justice of his cause would carry him forward, though he were alone; but he could not but derive encouragement from considering with whom he was associated. Let us not, he said, despair; it is a blessed cause, and success ere long will crown our exertions. Already we have gained one victory; we have obtained for these poor creatures the recognition of their human nature*, which, for a while, was most shamefully denied them. This is the first fruits of our efforts; let us persevere, and our triumph will be complete. Never, never, will we desist till we have wiped away this scandal from the Christian name; till we have released ourselves from the load of guilt under which we at present labour; and till we have extinguished every trace of this bloody traffic, which our posterity, looking back to the history of these enlightened times, will scarcely believe had been suffered to exist so long, a disgrace and a dishonour to our country.

He then moved, that the chairman be instructed to move for leave to bring in a bill to prevent the further importation of slaves into the British colonies in the West Indies.

Colonel Tarleton immediately rose up, and began by giving an historical account of the trade from the reign of Elizabeth to the present time. He then proceeded to the sanction which

* This point was actually obtained by the evidence before the House of Commons; for, after this, we heard no more of them as an inferior race.

parliament had always given it; hence it could not then be withdrawn without a breach of faith: hence, also, the private property embarked in it was sacred; nor could it be invaded, unless an adequate compensation were given in return.

They who had attempted the abolition of the trade were led away by a mistaken humanity; the Africans themselves had no objection to its continuance.

With respect to the middle passage, he believed the mortality there to be on an average only five in the hundred; whereas in regiments sent out to the West Indies, the average loss in the year was about ten and a half per cent.

The Slave Trade was absolutely necessary, if we meant to carry on our West India commerce; for many attempts had been made to cultivate the lands in the different islands by white labourers, but they had always failed.

It had also the merit of keeping up a number of seamen in readiness for the state. Lord Rodney had stated this as one of its advantages on the breaking out of a war. Liverpool alone could supply nine hundred and ninety-three seamen annually.

He would now advert to the connexions dependent upon the African trade. It was the duty of the House to protect the planters, whose lives had been, and were then, exposed to imminent dangers, and whose property had undergone an unmerited depreciation. To what could this depreciation, and to what could the late insurrection at Dominica be imputed, which had been saved from horrid carnage and midnight-butchery only by the adventitious arrival of two British regiments? They could only be attributed to the long delayed question of the abolition of the Slave Trade; and if this question were to go much longer unsettled, Jamaica would be endangered also.

To members of landed property he would observe, that the abolition would lessen the commerce of the country, and increase the national debt and the number of their taxes. The minister, he hoped, who patronized this wild scheme had some new pecuniary resource in store to supply the deficiencies it would occasion.

To the mercantile members he would speak thus: "A few

ministerial men in the house had been gifted with religious inspiration, and this had been communicated to other eminent personages in it: these enlightened philanthropists had discovered that it was necessary, for the sake of humanity, and for the honour of the nation, that the merchants concerned in the African trade should be persecuted, notwithstanding the sanction of their trade by Parliament, and notwithstanding that such persecution must aggrandize the rivals of Great Britain." Now how did this language sound? It might have done in the twelfth century, when all was bigotry and superstition; but let not a mistaken humanity, in these enlightened times, furnish a colourable pretext for any injurious attack on property or character.

These things being considered, he should certainly oppose the measure in contemplation. It would annihilate a trade, whose exports amounted to eight hundred thousand pounds annually, and which employed a hundred and sixty vessels, and more than five thousand seamen. It would destroy also the West India trade, which was of the annual value of six millions; and which employed one hundred and sixty thousand tons of shipping, and seamen in proportion. These were objects of too much importance to the country to be hazarded on an unnecessary speculation.

Mr. Grosvenor then rose. He complimented the humanity of Mr. Wilberforce, though he differed from him on the subject of his motion. He himself had read only the privy council report, and he wished for no other evidence. The question had then been delayed two years; had the abolition been so clear a point as it was said to be, it could not have needed either so much evidence or time.

He had heard a good deal about kidnapping, and other barbarous practices. He was sorry for them. But these were the natural consequences of the laws of Africa; and it became us as wise men to turn them to our own advantage. The Slave Trade was certainly not an amiable trade. Neither was that of a butcher; but yet it was a very necessary one.

There was great reason to doubt the propriety of the present motion. He had twenty reasons for disapproving it. The first was, that the thing was impossible. He needed not, therefore

to give the rest. Parliament, indeed, might relinquish the trade. But to whom? To foreigners, who would continue it, and without the humane regulations which were applied to it by his countrymen.

He would give advice to the House on this subject, in the words which the late Alderman Beckford used on a different occasion:—"Meddle not with troubled waters; they will be found to be bitter waters, and the waters of affliction." He again admitted, that the Slave Trade was not an amiable trade; but he would not gratify his humanity at the expense of the interests of his country; and he thought we should not too curiously inquire into the unpleasant circumstances which attended it.

Mr. James Martin succeeded Mr. Grosvenor. He said he had been long aware how much self-interest could pervert the judgment; but he was not apprized of the full power of it, till the Slave Trade became a subject of discussion. He had always conceived that the custom of trafficing in human beings had been incautiously begun, and without any reflection upon it; for he never could believe that any man, under the influence of moral principles, could suffer himself knowingly to carry on a trade replete with fraud, cruelty, and destruction; with destruction, indeed, of the worst kind, because it subjected the sufferers to a lingering death. But he found now, that even such a trade as this could be sanctioned.

It was well observed, in the petition from the University of Cambridge against the Slave Trade, "that a firm belief in the providence of a benevolent Creator assured them that no system, founded on the oppression of one part of mankind, could be beneficial to another." He felt much concern, that in an assembly of the representatives of the country, boasting itself zealous, not only for the preservation of its own liberties, but for the general rights of mankind, it should be necessary to say a single word upon such a subject; but the deceitfulness of the human heart was such, as to change the appearances of truth, when it stood in opposition to self-interest. And he had to lament that even among those, whose public duty it was to cling to the universal and eternal principles of truth, justice, and humanity, there were

found some who could defend that which was unjust, fraudulent, and cruel.

The doctrines he had heard that evening ought to have been reserved for times the most flagrantly profligate and abandoned. He never expected then to learn that the everlasting laws of righteousness were to give way to imaginary, political, and commercial expediency; and that thousands of our fellow-creatures were to be reduced to wretchedness, that individuals might enjoy opulence, or government a revenue.

He hoped that the House, for the sake of its own character, would explode these doctrines with all the marks of odium they deserved; and that all parties would join in giving a death-blow to this execrable trade. The royal family would, he expected, from their known benevolence, patronize the measure. Both Houses of Parliament were now engaged in the prosecution of a gentleman accused of cruelty and oppression in the East. But what were these cruelties, even if they could be brought home to him, when compared in number and degree to those which were every day and every hour committed in the abominable traffic which was now under their discussion! He considered, therefore, both Houses of Parliament as pledged upon this occasion. Of the support of the bishops he could have no doubt; because they were to render Christianity amiable, both by their doctrine and their example. Some of the inferior clergy had already manifested a laudable zeal in behalf of the injured Africans. The University of Cambridge had presented a petition to that House worthy of itself. The sister-university had, by one of her representatives, given sanction to the measure. Dissenters of various denominations, but particularly the Quakers, (who, to their immortal honour, had taken the lead in it,) had vied with those of the Established Church in this amiable contest. The first counties, and some of the largest trading towns, in the kingdom had espoused the cause. In short, there had never been more unanimity in the country, than in this righteous attempt.

With such support, and with so good a cause, it would be impossible to fail. Let but every man stand forth who had at any time boasted of himself as an Englishman, and success would

follow. But if he were to be unhappily mistaken as to the result, we must give up the name of Englishmen. Indeed, if we retained it, we should be the greatest hypocrites in the world; for we boasted of nothing more than of our own liberty; we manifested the warmest indignation at the smallest personal insult; we professed liberal sentiments towards other nations: but to do these things, and to continue such a traffic, would be to deserve the hateful character before mentioned. While we could hardly bear the sight of anything resembling slavery, even as a punishment, among ourselves, how could we consistently entail an eternal slavery upon others?

It had been frequently, but most disgracefully, said, that "we should not be too eager in setting the example: let the French begin it." Such a sentiment was a direct libel upon the ancient, noble, and generous character of this nation. We ought, on the other hand, under the blessings we enjoyed, and under the high sense we entertained of our own dignity as a people, to be proudly fearful, lest other nations should anticipate our design, and obtain the palm before us. It became us to lead. And if others should not follow us, it would belong to them to glory in the shame of trampling under foot the laws of reason, humanity, and religion.

This motion, he said, came strongly recommended to them. The honourable member who introduced it was justly esteemed for his character. He was the representative, too, of a noble county, which had been always ready to take the lead in every public measure for the good of the community, or for the general benefit of mankind; of a county, too, which had had the honour of producing a Saville. Had his illustrious predecessor been alive, he would have shown the same zeal on the same occasion. The preservation of the unalienable rights of all his fellow-creatures was one of the chief characteristics of that excellent citizen. Let every member in that House imitate him in the purity of their conduct and in the universal rectitude of their measures, and they would pay the same tender regard to the rights of other countries as to those of their own; and, for his part, he should never believe those persons to be sincere who were loud in their professions of love of liberty, if he saw that love confined to the narrow circle

of one community, which ought to be extended to the natural rights of every inhabitant of the globe.

But we should be better able to bring ourselves up to this standard of rectitude, if we were to put ourselves into the situation of those whom we oppressed. This was the rule of our religion. What should we think of those who should say, that it was their interest to injure us? But he hoped we should not deceive ourselves so grossly as to imagine that it was our real interest to oppress any one. The advantages to be obtained by tyranny were imaginary, and deceitful to the tyrant; and the evils they caused to the oppressed were grievous, and often insupportable.

Before he sat down, he would apologize if he had expressed himself too warmly on this subject. He did not mean to offend any one. There were persons connected with the trade, some of whom he pitied on account of the difficulty of their situation. But he should think most contemptibly of himself as a man, if he could talk on this traffic without emotion. It would be a sign to him of his own moral degradation. He regretted his inability to do justice to such a cause; but if, in having attempted to forward it, he had shown the weakness of his powers, he must console himself with the consideration, that he felt more solid comfort in having acted up to sound public principles, than he could have done from the exercise of the most splendid talents, against the conviction of his conscience.

Mr. Burdon rose, and said he was embarrassed to know how to act. Mr. Wilberforce had in a great measure met his ideas. Indeed he considered himself as much in his hands; but he wished to go gradually to the abolition of the trade. He wished to give time to the planters to recruit their stocks. He feared the immediate abolition might occasion a monopoly among such of them as were rich, to the detriment of the less affluent. We ought, like a judicious physician, to follow nature, and to promote a gradual recovery.

Mr. Francis rose next. After complimenting Mr. Wilberforce, he stated that personal considerations might appear to incline him to go against the side which he was about to take,

namely, that of strenuously supporting his motion. Having himself an interest in the West Indies, he thought that what he should submit to the House would have the double effect of evidence and argument; and he stated most unequivocally his opinion, that the abolition of the Slave Trade would tend materially to the benefit of the West Indies.

The arguments urged by the honourable mover were supported by the facts, which he had adduced from the evidence, more strongly than any arguments had been supported in any speech he had ever heard. He wished, however, that more of these facts had been introduced into the debate; for they were apt to have a greater effect upon the mind than mere reasonings, however just and powerful. Many had affirmed that the Slave Trade was politic and expedient; but it was worthy of remark, that no man had ventured to deny that it was criminal. Criminal, however, he declared it to be in the highest degree; and he believed it was equally impolitic. Both its inexpediency and injustice had been established by the honourable mover. He dwelt much on the unhappy situation of the negroes in the West Indies, who were without the protection of government or of efficient laws, and subject to the mere caprice of men, who were at once the parties, the judges, and the executioners.

He instanced an overseer, who, having thrown a negro into a copper of boiling cane-juice for a trifling offence, was punished merely by the loss of his place, and by being obliged to pay the value of the slave. He stated another instance of a girl of fourteen, who was dreadfully whipped for coming too late to her work. She fell down motionless after it; and was then dragged along the ground, by the legs, to an hospital; where she died. The murderer, though tried, was acquitted by a jury of his peers, upon the idea, that it was impossible a master could destroy his own property. This was a notorious fact. It was published in the *Jamaica Gazette*; and it had even happened since the question of the abolition had been started.

The only argument used against such cruelties, was the master's interest in the slave; but he urged the common cruelty to horses, in which their drivers had an equal interest with the

drivers of men in the colonies, as a proof that this was no security. He had never heard an instance of a master being punished for the murder of his slave. The propagation of the slaves was so far from being encouraged, that it was purposely checked, because it was thought more profitable and less troublesome to buy a full grown negro, than to rear a child. He repeated that his interest might have inclined him to the other side of the question; but he did not choose to compromise between his interest and his duty; for, if he abandoned his duty, he should not be happy in this world; nor should he deserve happiness in the next.

Mr. Pitt rose; but he said it was only to move, seeing that justice could not be done to the subject this evening, that the further consideration of the question might be adjourned to the next.

Mr. Cawthorne and Colonel Tarleton both opposed this motion, and Colonel Phipps and Lord Carhampton supported it.

Mr. Fox said, the opposition to the adjournment was uncandid and unbecoming. They who opposed it well knew that the trade could not bear discussion. Let it be discussed; and, although there were symptoms of predetermination in some, the abolition of it must be carried. He would not believe that there could be found in the House of Commons men of such hard hearts and inaccessible understandings, as to vote an assent to its continuance, and then go home to their families, satisfied with their vote, after they had been once made acquainted with the subject.

Mr. Pitt agreed with Mr. Fox, that from a full discussion of the subject there was every reason to augur that the abolition would be adopted. Under the imputations, with which this trade was loaded, gentlemen should remember, they could not do justice to their own characters, unless they stood up, and gave their reasons for opposing the abolition of it. It was unusual also to force any question of such importance to so hasty a decision. For his own part, it was his duty, from the situation in which he stood, to state fully his own sentiments on the question; and, however exhausted both he and the House might

be, he was resolved it should not pass without discussion, as long as he had strength to utter a word upon it. Every principle that could bind a man of honour and conscience, would impel him to give the most powerful support he could to the motion for the abolition.

The motion of Mr. Pitt was assented to, and the House was adjourned accordingly.

On the next day the subject was resumed. Sir William Yonge rose, and said, that, though he differed from the honourable mover, he had much admired his speech of the last evening. Indeed the recollection of it made him only the more sensible of the weakness of his own powers; and yet, having what he supposed to be irrefragable arguments in his possession, he felt emboldened to proceed.

And, first, before he could vote for the abolition, he wished to be convinced, that, whilst Britain were to lose, Africa would gain. As for himself, he hated a traffic in men, and joyfully anticipated its termination at no distant period under a wise system of regulation: but he considered the present measure as crude and indolent; and as precluding better and wiser measures, which were already in train. A British Parliament should attain not only the best ends, but by the wisest means.

Great Britain might abandon her share of this trade, but she could not abolish it. Parliament was not an assembly of delegates from the powers of Europe, but of a single nation. It could not therefore suppress the trade; but would eventually aggravate those miseries incident to it, which every enlightened man must acknowledge, and every good man must deplore. He wished the traffic for ever closed. But other nations were only waiting for our decision, to seize the part we should leave them. The new projects of these would be intemperate; and, in the zeal of rivalship, the present evils of comparatively sober dealing would be aggravated beyond all estimate in this new and heated auction of bidders for life and limb. We might, indeed, by regulation give an example of new principles of policy and of justice; but if we were to withdraw suddenly from this com-

merce, like Pontius Pilate, we should wash our hands, indeed, but we should not be innocent as to the consequences.

On the first agitation of this business, Mr. Wilberforce had spoken confidently of other nations following our example. But had not the National Assembly of France referred the Slave Trade to a select committee, and had not that committee rejected the measure of its abolition? By the evidence it appeared, that the French and Spaniards were then giving bounties to the Slave Trade; that Denmark was desirous of following it; that America was encouraging it; and that the Dutch had recognized its necessity, and recommended its recovery. Things were bad enough indeed as they were, but he was sure this rivalship would make them worse.

He did not admit the disorders imputed to the trade in all their extent. Pillage and kidnapping could not be general, on account of the populousness of the country; though too frequent instances of it had been proved. Crimes might be falsely imputed. This he admitted; but only partially. Witchcraft, he believed, was the secret of poisoning, and therefore deserved the severest punishment. That there should be a number of convictions for adultery, where polygamy was a custom, was not to be wondered at; but he feared, if a sale of these criminals were to be done away, massacre would be the substitute.

An honourable member had asked on a former day, "Is it an excuse for robbery to say that another would have committed it?" But the Slave Trade did not necessarily imply robbery. Not long since Great Britain sold her convicts, indirectly at least, to slavery; but he was no advocate for the trade. He wished it had never been begun, and that it might soon terminate. But the means were not adequate to the end proposed.

Mr. Burke had said on a former occasion, "that in adopting the measure we must prepare to pay the price of our virtue." He was ready to pay his share of that price; but the effect of the purchase must be first ascertained. If they did not estimate this, it was not benevolence, but dissipation. Effects were to be duly appreciated; and though statesmen might rest everything on a plausible manifesto of cause, the humbler moralist, medi-

tating peace and good will towards men, would venture to call such statesmen responsible for consequences.

In regard to the colonies, a sudden abolition would be oppression. The legislatures there should be led, and not forced, upon this occasion. He was persuaded they would act wisely to attain the end pointed out to them. They would see that a natural increase of their negroes might be effected by an improved system of legislation; and that in the result the Slave Trade would be no longer necessary.

A sudden abolition, also, would occasion dissatisfaction there. Supplies were necessary for some time to come. The negroes did not yet generally increase by birth. The gradation of ages was not yet duly filled. These and many defects might be remedied, but not suddenly.

It would cause, also, distress there. The planters, not having their expected supplies, could not discharge their debts; hence their slaves would be seized and sold. Nor was there any provision in this case against the separation of families, except as to the mother and infant child. These separations were one of the chief outrages complained of in Africa. Why, then, should we promote them in the West Indies? The confinement on board a slave-ship had been also bitterly complained of; but, under distraint for the debt of a master, the poor slave might linger in a gaol twice or thrice the time of the Middle Passage.

He again stated his abhorrence of the Slave Trade; but as a resource, though he hoped but a temporary one, it was of such consequence to the existence of the country, that it could not suddenly be withdrawn. The value of the imports and exports between Great Britain and the West Indies, including the excise and customs, was between seven and eight millions annually; and the tonnage of the ships employed about an eighth of the whole tonnage of these kingdoms.

He complained that in the evidence the West Indian planters had been by no means spared. Cruel stories had been hastily and lightly told against them. Invidious comparisons had been made to their detriment; but it was well known that one of our best comic writers, when he wished to show benevolence

in its fairest colours, had personified it in the character of the West Indian. He wished the slave might become as secure as the apprentice in this country; but it was necessary that the alarms concerning the abolition of the Slave Trade should, in the mean time, be quieted; and he trusted that the good sense and true benevolence of the House would reject the present motion.

Mr. Matthew Montagu rose and said a few words in support of the motion; and after condemning the trade in the strongest manner, he declared, that as long as he had life he would use every faculty of his body and mind in endeavouring to promote its abolition.

Lord John Russell succeeded Mr. Montagu. He said, that although slavery was repugnant to his feelings, he must vote against the abolition as visionary and delusive. It was a feeble attempt, without the power, to serve the cause of humanity. Other nations would take up the trade. Whenever a bill of wise regulation should be brought forward, no man would be more ready than himself to lend his support. In this way the rights of humanity might be asserted without injury to others. He hoped he should not incur censure by his vote; for, let his understanding be what it might, he did not know that he had, notwithstanding the assertions of Mr. Fox, an inaccessible heart.

Mr. Stanley (agent for the islands) rose next. He felt himself called upon, he said, to refute the many calumnies which had for years been propagated against the planters, (even through the medium of the pulpit, which should have been employed to better purposes,) and which had at length produced the mischievous measure, which was now under the discussion of the House. A cry had been sounded forth, and from one end of the kingdom to the other, as if there had never been a slave from Adâm to the present time. But it appeared to him to have been the intention of Providence, from the very beginning, that one set of men should be slaves to another. This truth was as old as it was universal. It was recognised in every history, under every government, and in every religion. Nor did the Christian religion itself, if the comments of Dr. Halifax, Bishop of Gloucester,

on a passage of St. Paul's epistle to the Corinthians were true, show more repugnance to slavery than any other.

He denied that the slaves were procured in the manner which had been described. It was the custom of all savages to kill their prisoners; and the Africans ought to be thankful that they had been carried safe into the British colonies.

As to the tales of misery in the Middle Passage, they were gross falsehoods; and as to their treatment in the West Indies, he knew personally that it was, in general, indulgent and humane.

With regard to promoting their increase by any better mode of treatment, he wished gentlemen would point it out to him. As a planter he would thank them for it. It was absurd to suppose that he and others were blind to their own interest. It was well known that one Creole slave was worth two Africans; and their interest, therefore, must suggest to them, that the propagation of slaves was preferable to the purchase of imported negroes, of whom one half very frequently died in the seasoning.

He then argued the impossibility of beasts doing the work of the plantations. He endeavoured to prove that the number of these adequate to this purpose could not be supplied with food; and after having made many other observations, which, on account of the lowness of his voice, could not be heard, he concluded by objecting to the motion.

Mr. William Smith rose. He wondered how the last speaker could have had the boldness to draw arguments from scripture in support of the Slave Trade. Such arguments could be intended only to impose on those who never took the trouble of thinking for themselves. Could it be thought for a moment, that the good sense of the House could be misled by a few perverted or misapplied passages, in direct opposition to the whole tenor and spirit of Christianity; to the theory, he might say, of almost every religion, which had ever appeared in the world? Whatever might have been advanced, every body must feel that the Slave Trade could not exist an hour, if that excellent maxim, "to do to others as we would wish that others should do to us," had its proper influence on the conduct of men.

Nor was Mr. Stanley more happy in his argument of the antiquity and universality of slavery. Because a practise had existed, did it necessarily follow that it was just? By this argument every crime might be defended from the time of Cain. The slaves of antiquity, however, were in a situation far preferable to that of the negroes in the West Indies. A passage in Macrobius, which exemplified this in the strongest manner, was now brought to his recollection. "Our ancestors," says Macrobius, "denominated the master, father of the family, and the slave, domestic, with the intention of removing all odium from the condition of the master, and all contempt from that of the servant." Could this language be applied to the present state of West India slavery?

It had been complained of by those who supported the trade, that they laboured under great disadvantages by being obliged to contend against the most splendid abilities which the House could boast. But he believed they laboured under one, which was worse, and for which no talents could compensate; he meant the impossibility of maintaining their ground fairly on any of those principles, which every man within those walls had been accustomed, from his infancy, to venerate as sacred. He and his friends, too, laboured under some disadvantages. They had been charged with fanaticism. But what had Mr. Long said, when he addressed himself to those planters, who were desirous of attempting improvements on their estates? He advised them "not to be diverted by partial views, vulgar prejudices, or the ridicule which might spring from weak minds, from a benevolent attention to the public good." But neither by these nor by other charges were he or his friends to be diverted from the prosecution of their purpose. They were convinced of the rectitude and high importance of their object; and were determined never to desist from pursuing it, till it should be attained.

But they had to struggle with difficulties far more serious. The West Indian interest which opposed them, was a collected body; of great power, affluence, connexions, and respectability.

Artifice had also been employed. Abolition and emancipation had been so often confounded, and by those who knew better,

that it must have been purposely done, to throw an odium on the measure which was now before them.

The abolitionists had been also accused as the authors of the late insurrection in Dominica. A revolt had certainly taken place in that island. But revolts there had occurred frequently before. Mr. Stanley himself, in attempting to fix this charge upon them, had related circumstances which amounted to their entire exculpation. He had said that all was quiet there till the disturbances in the French islands; when some negroes from the latter had found their way to Dominica, and had excited the insurrection in question. He had also said, that the negroes in our own islands hated the idea of the abolition; for they thought, as no new labourers were to come in, they should be subjected to increased hardships. But if they and their masters hated this same measure, how was this coincidence of sentiment to give birth to insurrections?

Other fallacies, also, had been industriously propagated. Of the African trade, it had been said, that the exports amounted to a million annually; whereas, from the report on the table, it had on an average amounted to little more than half a million; and this included the articles for the purchase of African produce, which were of the value of 140,000*l.*

The East Indian Trade, also, had been said to depend on the West Indian and the African. In the first place, it had but very little connexion with the former at all. Its connexion with the latter was principally on account of the saltpetre which it furnished for making gunpowder. Out of nearly three millions of pounds in weight of the latter article, which had been exported in a year from this country, one-half had been sent to Africa alone; for the purposes, doubtless, of maintaining peace, and encouraging civilization among its various tribes! Four or five thousand persons were said, also, to depend for their bread in manufacturing guns for the African trade; and these, it was pretended, could not make guns of another sort.—But where lay the difficulty?—One of the witnesses had unravelled it. He had seen the negroes maimed by the bursting of these guns. They killed more from the butt than from the muzzle. Another

had stated, that on the sea-coast the natives were afraid to fire a trade-gun.

In the West Indian commerce, two hundred and forty thousand tons of shipping were stated to be employed. But here deception intruded itself again. This statement included every vessel, great and small, which went from the British West Indies to America, and to the foreign islands; and what was yet more unfair, all the repeated voyages of each throughout the year. The shipping, which could only fairly be brought into this account, did but just exceed half that which had been mentioned.

In a similar manner had the islands themselves been overrated. Their value had been computed, for the information of the privy council, at thirty-six millions; but the planters had estimated them at seventy. The truth, however, might possibly lie between these extremes. He by no means wished to depreciate their importance; but he did not like that such palpable misrepresentations should go unnoticed.

An honourable member (Colonel Tarleton) had disclaimed every attempt to interest the feelings of those present, but had desired to call them to reason and accounts. He also desired (though it was a question of feeling, if any one ever was,) to draw the attention of the committee to reason and accounts—to the voice of reason instead of that of prejudice, and to accounts in the place of idle apprehensions. The result, he doubted not, would be a full persuasion, that policy and justice were inseparable upon this, as upon every other occasion.

The same gentleman had enlarged on the injustice of depriving the Liverpool merchants of a business, on which were founded their honour and their fortunes. On what part of it they founded their honour he could not conjecture, except from those passages in the evidence, where it appeared, that their agents in Africa had systematically practised every fraud and villany, which the meanest and most unprincipled cunning could suggest, to impose on the ignorance of those with whom they traded.

The same gentleman had also lamented, that the evidence had not been taken upon oath. He himself lamented it too. Num-

berless facts had been related by eye-witnesses, called in support of the abolition, so dreadfully atrocious, that they appeared incredible; and seemed rather, to use the expression of Ossian, like "the histories of the days of other times." These procured for the trade a species of acquittal, which it could not have obtained, had the committee been authorised to administer an oath. He apprehended, also, in this case, that some other persons would have been rather more guarded in their testimony. Captain Knox would not then perhaps have told the committee, that six hundred slaves could have had comfortable room at night in his vessel of about one hundred and forty tons; when there could have been no more than five feet six inches in length, and fifteen inches in breadth, to about two-thirds of his number.

The same gentleman had also dwelt upon the Slave Trade as a nursery for seamen. But it had appeared by the muster-rolls of the slave-vessels, then actually on the table of the house, that more than a fifth of them died in the service, exclusive of those who perished when discharged in the West Indies; and yet he had been instructed by his constituents to maintain this false position. His reasoning, too, was very curious; for, though numbers might die, yet as one half who entered were landsmen, seamen were continually forming. Not to dwell on the expensive cruelty of forming these seamen by the yearly destruction of so many hundreds, this very statement was flatly contradicted by the evidence. The muster-rolls from Bristol stated the proportion of landsmen in the trade there at one twelfth, and the proper officers of Liverpool itself at but a sixteenth of the whole employed. In the face again of the most glaring facts, others had maintained that the mortality in these vessels did not exceed that of other trades in the tropical climates. But the same documents, which proved that twenty-three per cent. were destroyed in this wasting traffic, proved that in West India ships only about one and a half per cent. were lost, including every casualty. But the very men, under whose management this dreadful mortality had been constantly occurring, had coolly said, that much of it might be avoided by proper regulations. How criminal then

were they, who, knowing this, had neither publicly proposed, nor in their practice adopted, a remedy!

The average loss of the slaves on board, which had been calculated by Mr. Wilberforce at twelve and a half per cent., had been denied. He believed this calculation, taking in all the circumstances connected with it, to be true; but that for years not less than one-tenth had so perished, he would challenge those concerned in the traffic to disprove. Much evidence had been produced on the subject; but the voyages had been generally selected. There was only one who had disclosed the whole account. This was Mr. Anderson of London, whose engagements in this trade had been very inconsiderable. His loss had only amounted to three per cent.; but, unfortunately for the slave-traders of Liverpool, his vessel had not taken above three-fourths of that number in proportion to the tonnage which they had stated to be necessary to the very existence of their trade.

An honourable member (Mr. Grosvenor) had attributed the protraction of this business to those who had introduced it. But from whom did the motion for further evidence (when that of the privy council was refused) originate, but from the enemies of the abolition? The same gentleman had said, it was impossible to abolish the trade; but where was the impossibility of forbidding the further importation of slaves into our own colonies? and beyond this the motion did not extend.

The latter argument had also been advanced by Sir William Yonge and others. But allowing it its full force, would there be no honour in the dereliction of such a commerce? Would it be nothing publicly to recognise great and just principles? Would our example be nothing!—Yes: every country would learn, from our experiment, that American colonies could be cultivated without the necessity of continual supplies equally expensive and disgraceful.

But we might do more than merely lay down principles or propose examples. We might, in fact, diminish the evil itself immediately by no inconsiderable part,—by the whole of our own supply: and here he could not at all agree with the honourable baronet, in what seemed to him a commercial paradox, that

the taking away from an open trade by far the largest customer, and the lessening of the consumption of the article, would increase both the competition and the demand, and of course all those mischiefs, which it was their intention to avert.

That the civilization of the Africans was promoted, as had been asserted, by their intercourse with the Europeans, was void of foundation, as had appeared from the evidence. In manners and dishonesty they had indeed assimilated with those who frequented their coasts. But the greatest industry and the least corruption of morals were in the interior, where they were out of the way of this civilizing connexion.

To relieve Africa from famine, was another of the benign reasons which had been assigned for continuing the trade. That famines had occurred there, he did not doubt; but that they should annually occur, and with such arithmetical exactness as to suit the demands of the Slave Trade, was a circumstance most extraordinary; so wonderful, indeed, that, could it once be proved, he should consider it as a far better argument in favour of the divine approbation of that trade, than any which had ever yet been produced.

As to the effect of the abolition on the West Indies, it would give weight to every humane regulation which had been made; by substituting a certain and obvious interest, in the place of one depending upon chances and calculation. An honourable member (Mr. Stanley) had spoken of the impossibility of cultivating the estates there without further importations of negroes; and yet, of all the authorities he had brought to prove his case, there was scarcely one which might not be pressed to serve more or less effectually against him. Almost every planter he had named had found his negroes increase under the good treatment he had professed to give them; and it was an axiom, throughout the whole evidence, that, wherever they were well used, importations were not necessary. It had been said, indeed, by some adverse witnesses, that in Jamaica all possible means had been used to keep up the stock by breeding; but how preposterous was this, when it was allowed that the morals of the slaves had been

totally neglected, and that the planters preferred buying a larger proportion of males than females!

The misfortune was, that prejudice, and not reason, was the enemy to be subdued. The prejudices of the West Indians on these points were numerous and inveterate. Mr. Long himself had characterised them on this account, in terms which he should have felt diffident in using. But Mr. Long had shown his own prejudices also: for he justified the chaining of the Negroes on board the slave-vessels, on account of "their bloody, cruel, and malicious dispositions." But hear his commendation of some of the Aborigines of Jamaica, "who had miserably perished in caves, whither they had retired to escape the tyranny of the Spaniards. These," says he, "left a glorious monument of their having disdained to survive the loss of their liberty and their country." And yet this same historian could not perceive that this natural love of liberty might operate as strongly and as laudably in the African Negro, as in the Indian of Jamaica.

He was concerned to acknowledge that these prejudices were yet further strengthened by resentment against those who had taken an active part in the abolition of the Slave Trade. But it was never the object of these to throw a stigma on the whole body of the West Indians; but to prove the miserable effects of the trade. This it was their duty to do; and if, in doing this, disgraceful circumstances had come out, it was not their fault; and it must never be forgotten that they were true.

That the slaves were exposed to great misery in the islands, was true as well from inference as from facts: for what might not be expected from the use of arbitrary power, where the three characters of party, judge, and executioner were united! The slaves, too, were more capable on account of their passions, than the beasts in the field, of exciting the passions of their tyrants. To what a length the ill-treatment of them might be carried, might be learnt from the instance which General Tottenham mentioned to have seen in the year 1780 in the streets of Bridge Town, Barbados: "A youth about nineteen (to use his own words in the evidence), entirely naked, with an iron collar about his neck, having five long projecting spikes. His body both

before and behind was covered with wounds. His belly and thighs were almost cut to pieces, with running ulcers all over them; and a finger might have been laid in some of the weals. He could not sit down, because his hinder part was mortified; and it was impossible for him to lie down, on account of the prongs of his collar." He supplicated the General for relief. The latter asked who had punished him so dreadfully? The youth answered, his master had done it. And because he could not work, this same master, in the same spirit of perversion, which extorts from Scripture a justification of the Slave Trade, had fulfilled the apostolic maxim, that he should have nothing to eat. The use he meant to make of this instance was to show the unprotected state of the slaves. What must it be, where such an instance could pass not only unpunished, but almost unregarded! If, in the streets of London, but a dog were to be seen lacerated like this miserable man, how would the cruelty of the wretch be execrated, who had thus even abused a brute!

The judicial punishments also inflicted upon the Negro showed the low estimation, in which, in consequence of the strength of old customs and deep-rooted prejudices, they were held. Mr. Edwards, in his speech to the Assembly at Jamaica, stated the following case, as one which had happened in one of the rebellions there. Some slaves surrounded the dwelling-house of their mistress. She was in bed with a lovely infant. They deliberated upon the means of putting her to death in torment. But in the end one of them reserved her for his mistress; and they killed her infant with an axe before her face. "Now," says Mr. Edwards, (addressing himself to his audience,) "you will think that no torments were too great for such horrible excesses. Nevertheless I am of a different opinion. I think that death, unaccompanied with cruelty, should be the utmost exertion of human authority over our unhappy fellow-creatures." Torments, however, were always inflicted in these cases. The punishment was gibbeting alive, and exposing the delinquents to perish by the gradual effects of hunger, thirst, and parching sun; in which situation they were known to suffer for nine days, with a forti-

tude scarcely credible, never uttering a single groan. But horrible as the excesses might have been, which occasioned these punishments, it must be remembered, that they were committed by ignorant savages, who had been dragged from all they held most dear; whose patience had been exhausted by a cruel and loathsome confinement during their transportation; and whose resentment had been wound up to the highest pitch of fury by the lash of the driver.

But he would now mention another instance, by way of contrast, out of the evidence. A child on board a slave-ship, of about ten months old, took sulk and would not eat. The captain flogged it with a cat; swearing that he would make it eat, or kill it. From this and other ill-treatment the child's legs swelled. He then ordered some water to be made hot to abate the swelling. But even his tender mercies were cruel; for the cook, on putting his hand into the water, said it was too hot. Upon this the captain swore at him, and ordered the feet to be put in. This was done. The nails and skin came off. Oiled cloths were then put round them. The child was at length tied to a heavy log. Two or three days afterwards, the captain caught it up again; and repeated that he would made it eat, or kill it. He immediately flogged it again, and in a quarter of an hour it died. But, after the child was dead, whom should the barbarian select to throw it overboard, but the wretched mother? In vain she started from the office. He beat her, till he made her take up the child and carry it to the side of the vessel. She then dropped it into the sea, turning her head the other way that she might not see it. Now it would naturally be asked, was not this captain also gibbeted alive? Alas! although the execrable barbarity of the European exceeded that of the Africans before mentioned, almost as much as his opportunities of instruction had been greater than theirs, no notice whatsoever was taken of this horrible action; and a thousand similar cruelties had been committed in this abominable trade with equal impunity: but he would say no more. He would vote for the abolition, not only as it would do away all the evils complained of in Africa and the Middle Passage; but as it would be the most effectual means

of ameliorating the condition of those unhappy persons, who were still to continue slaves in the British colonies.

Mr. Courtenay rose. He said, he could not but consider the assertion of Sir William Yonge as a mistake, that the Slave Trade, if abandoned by us, would fall into the hands of France. It ought to be recollected, with what approbation the motion for abolishing it, made by the late Mirabeau, had been received; although the situation of the French colonies might then have presented obtacles to carrying the measure into immediate execution. He had no doubt, if parliament were to begin, so wise and enlightened a body as the National Assembly would follow the example. But even if France were not to relinquish the trade, how could we, if justice required its abolition, hesitate as to our part of it?

The trade, it had been said, was conducted upon the principles of humanity. Yes: we rescued the Africans from what we were pleased to call their wretched situation in their own country, and then we took credit for our humanity; because, after having killed one half of them in the seasoning, we substituted what we were again pleased to call a better treatment than that which they would have experienced at home.

It had been stated that the principle of war among savages was a general massacre. This was not true. They frequently adopted the captives into their own families; and, so far from massacring the women and children, they often gave them the protection which the weakness of their age and sex demanded.

There could be no doubt, that the practice of kidnapping prevailed in Africa. As to witchcraft, it had been made a crime in the reign of James the First in this country, for the purpose of informations; and how much more likely were informations to take place in Africa, under the encouragement afforded by the Slave Trade! This trade, it had been said, was sanctioned by twenty-six acts of parliament. He did not doubt but fifty-six might be found, by which parliament had sanctioned witchcraft; of the existence of which we had now no belief whatever.

It had been said by Mr. Stanley that the pulpit had been

used as an instrument of attack on the Slave Trade. He was happy to learn it had been so well employed; and he hoped the Bishops would rise up in the House of Lords, with the virtuous indignation which became them, to abolish a traffic so contrary to humanity, justice, and religion.

He entreated every member to recollect, that on his vote that night depended the happiness of millions; and that it was then in his power to promote a measure, of which the benefits would be felt over one whole quarter of the globe; that the seeds of civilization might, by the present bill, be sown all over Africa; and the first principles of humanity be established in regions where they had hitherto been excluded by the existence of this execrable trade.

Lord Carysfort rose, and said, that the great cause of the abolition had flourished by the manner in which it had been opposed. No one argument of solid weight had been adduced against it. It had been shown, but never disproved, that the colonial laws were inadequate to the protection of the slaves; that the punishments of the latter were most unmerciful; that they were deprived of the right of self-defence against any White man; and, in short, that the system was totally repugnant to the principles of the British constitution.

Colonel Phipps followed Lord Carysfort. He denied that this was a question in which the rights of humanity and the laws of nature were concerned. The Africans became slaves in consequence of the constitution of their own governments. These were founded in absolute despotism. Every subject was an actual slave. The inhabitants were slaves to the great men, and the great men were slaves to the prince. Prisoners of war, too, were by law subject to slavery. Such being the case, he saw no more cruelty in disposing of them to our merchants, than to those of any other nation. Criminals, also, in cases of adultery and witchcraft, became slaves by the same laws.

It had been said, that there were no regulations in the West Indies for the protection of slaves. There were several; though he was ready to admit that more were necessary; and he would go in this respect as far as humanity might require. He had

passed ten months in Jamaica, where he had never seen any such acts of cruelty as had been talked of. Those which he had seen were not exercised by the Whites, but by the Blacks. The dreadful stories which had been told, ought no more to fix a general stigma upon the planters, than the story of Mrs. Brownrigg to stamp this polished metropolis with the general brand of murder. There was once a haberdasher's wife (Mrs. Nairne) who locked up her apprentice girl, and starved her to death; but did ever any body think of abolishing haberdashery on this account? He was persuaded the Negroes in the West Indies were cheerful and happy. They were fond of ornaments; but it was not the characteristic of miserable persons to show a taste for finery. Such a taste, on the contrary, implied a cheerful and contented mind. He was sorry to differ from his friend Mr. Wilberforce, but he must oppose his motion.

Mr. Pitt rose, and said, that from the first hour of his having had the honour to sit in parliament down to the present, among all the questions, whether political or personal, in which it had been his fortune to take a share, there had never been one in which his heart was so deeply interested as in the present; both on account of the serious principles it involved, and the consequences connected with it.

The present was not a mere question of feeling. The argument, which ought, in his opinion, to determine the committee, was, that the Slave Trade was unjust. It was, therefore, such a trade as it was impossible for him to support, unless it could be first proved to him, that there were no laws of morality binding upon nations; and that it was not the duty of a legislature to restrain its subjects from invading the happiness of other countries, and from violating the fundamental principles of justice.

Several had stated the impracticability of the measure before them. They wished to see the trade abolished; but there was some necessity for continuing it, which they conceived to exist. Nay, almost every one, he believed, appeared to wish that the further importation of slaves might cease, provided it could be made out that the population of the West Indies could be maintained without it. He proposed, therefore, to consider the

latter point; for, as the impracticability of keeping up the population there appeared to operate as the chief objection, he trusted that, by showing it to be ill founded, he should clear away all other obstacles whatever; so that, having no ground either of justice or necessity to stand upon, there could be no excuse left to the committee for resisting the present motion.

He might reasonably, however, hope that they would not reckon any small or temporary disadvantage, which might arise from the abolition, to be a sufficient reason against it. It was surely not any slight degree of expediency, nor any small balance of profit, nor any light shades of probability on the one side, rather than on the other, which would determine them on this question. He asked pardon even for the supposition. The Slave Trade was an evil of such magnitude, that there must be a common wish in the committee at once to put an end to it, if there were no great and serious obstacles. It was a trade, by which multitudes of unoffending nations were deprived of the blessings of civilization, and had their peace and happiness invaded. It ought, therefore, to be no common expediency, it ought to be nothing less than the utter ruin of our islands, which it became those to plead, who took upon them to defend the continuance of it.

He could not help thinking that the West India gentlemen had manifested an over great degree of sensibility as to the point in question; and that their alarms had been unreasonably excited upon it. He had examined the subject carefully for himself; and he would now detail those reasons, which had induced him firmly to believe, not only that no permanent mischief would follow from the abolition, but not even any such temporary inconvenience as could be stated to be a reason for preventing the House from agreeing to the motion before them; on the contrary, that the abolition itself would lay the foundation for the more solid improvement of all the various interests of those colonies.

In doing this he should apply his observations chiefly to Jamaica, which contained more than half the slaves in the British West Indies; and if he should succeed in proving that no material detriment could arise to the population there, this

would afford so strong a presumption with respect to the other islands, that the House could no longer hesitate whether they should, or should not, put a stop to this most horrid trade.

In the twenty years ending in 1788, the annual loss of slaves in Jamaica (that is, the excess of deaths above the births,) appeared to be one in the hundred. In a preceding period the loss was greater; and, in a period before that greater still; there having been a continual gradation in the decrease through the whole time. It might fairly be concluded, therefore, that (the average loss of the last period being one per cent.) the loss in the former part of it would be somewhat more, and in the latter part somewhat less, than one per cent.; insomuch that it might be fairly questioned, whether, by this time, the births and deaths in Jamaica might not be stated as nearly equal. It was to be added, that a peculiar calamity, which swept away fifteen thousand slaves, had occasioned a part of the mortality in the last-mentioned period. The probable loss, therefore, now to be expected, was very inconsiderable indeed.

There was, however, one circumstance to be added, which the West India gentlemen, in stating this matter, had entirely overlooked; and which was so material, as clearly to reduce the probable diminution in the population of Jamaica down to nothing. In all the calculations he had referred to of the comparative number of births and deaths, all the Negroes in the island were included. The newly imported, who died in the seasoning, made a part; but these swelled, most materially, the number of the deaths. Now, as these extraordinary deaths would cease, as soon as the importation ceased, a deduction of them ought to be made from his present calculation.

But the number of those, who thus died in the seasoning, would make up of itself nearly the whole of that one per cent. which had been stated. He particularly pressed an attention to this circumstance; for the complaint of being likely to want hands in Jamaica, arose from the mistake of including the present unnatural deaths, caused by the seasoning, among the natural and perpetual causes of mortality. These deaths, being erroneously taken into the calculations, gave the planters an

idea that the numbers could not be kept up. These deaths, which were caused merely by the Slave Trade, furnished the very ground, therefore, on which the continuance of that trade had been thought necessary.

The evidence as to this point was clear; for it would be found in that dreadful catalogue of deaths, arising from the seasoning and the passage, which the House had been condemned to look into, that one half died. An annual mortality of two thousand slaves in Jamaica might be therefore charged to the importation; which, compared with the whole number on the island, hardly fell short of the whole one per cent. decrease.

Joining this with all the other considerations, he would then ask, could the decrease of the slaves in Jamaica be such—could the colonies be so destitute of means—could the planters, when by their own accounts they were establishing daily new regulations for the benefit of the slaves—could they, under all these circumstances, be permitted to plead that total impossibility of keeping up their number, which they had rested on, as being indeed the only possible pretext for allowing fresh importations from Africa? He appealed, therefore, to the sober judgment of all, whether the situation of Jamaica was such, as to justify a hesitation in agreeing to the present motion.

It might be observed, also, that, when the importations should stop, that disproportion between the sexes, which was one of the obstacles to population, would gradually diminish; and a natural order of things be established. Through the want of this natural order, a thousand grievances were created, which it was impossible to define; and which it was in vain to think that, under such circumstances, we could cure. But the abolition, of itself, would work this desirable effect. The West Indians would then feel a near and urgent interest to enter into a thousand little details, which it was impossible for him to describe, but which would have the greatest influence on population. A foundation would thus be laid for the general welfare of the islands; a new system would rise up, the reverse of the old; and eventually both their general wealth and happiness would increase.

He had now proved far more than he was bound to do; for, if he could only show that the abolition would not be ruinous, it would be enough. He could give up, therefore, three arguments out of four, through the whole of what he had said, and yet have enough left for his position. As to the Creoles, they would undoubtedly increase. They differed in this entirely from the imported slaves, who were both a burthen and a curse to themselves and others. The measure now proposed would operate like a charm; and, besides stopping all the miseries in Africa and the passage, would produce even more benefit in the West Indies than legal regulations could effect.

He would now just touch upon the question of emancipation. A rash emancipation of the slaves would be mischievous. In that unhappy situation, to which our baneful conduct had brought ourselves and them, it would be no justice on either side to give them liberty. They were as yet incapable of it; but their situation might be gradually amended. They might be relieved from everything harsh and severe; raised from their present degraded state; and put under the protection of the law. Till then, to talk of emancipation was insanity. But it was the system of fresh importations, which interfered with these principles of improvement; and it was only the abolition which could establish them. This suggestion had its foundation in human nature. Wherever the incentive of honour, credit, and fair profit appeared, energy would spring up; and when these labourers should have the natural springs of human action afforded them, they would then rise to the natural level of human industry.

From Jamaica he would now go to the other islands. In Barbadoes the slaves had rather increased. In St. Kitts the decrease for fourteen years had been but three-fourths per cent.; but here many of the observations would apply, which he had used in the case of Jamaica. In Antigua many had died by a particular calamity. But for this, the decrease would have been trifling. In Nevis and Montserrat there was little or no disproportion of the sexes; so that it might well be hoped, that the numbers would be kept up in these islands. In Dominica some

controversy had arisen about the calculation; but Governor Orde had stated an increase of births above the deaths. From Grenada and St. Vincent's no accurate accounts had been delivered in answer to the queries sent them; but they were probably not in circumstances less favourable than in the other islands.

On a full review, then, of the state of the Negro population in the West Indies, was there any serious ground of alarm from the abolition of the Slave Trade? Where was the impracticability, on which alone so many had rested their objections? Must we not blush at pretending, that it would distress our consciences to accede to this measure, as far as the question of the Negro population was concerned?

Intolerable were the mischiefs of this trade, both in its origin, and through every stage of its progress. To say that slaves could be furnished us by fair and commercial means was ridiculous. The trade sometimes ceased, as during the late war. The demand was more or less according to circumstances. But how was it possible, that to a demand so exceedingly fluctuating the supply should always exactly accommodate itself? Alas! we made human beings the subject of commerce; we talked of them as such; and yet we would not allow them the common principle of commerce, that the supply must accommodate itself to the consumption. It was not from wars, then, that the slaves were chiefly procured. They were obtained in proportion as they were wanted. If a demand for slaves arose, a supply was forced in one way or other; and it was in vain, overpowered as we then were with positive evidence, as well as the reasonableness of the supposition, to deny that by the Slave Trade we occasioned all the enormities which had been alleged against it.

Sir William Yonge had said, that if we were not to take the Africans from their country, they would be destroyed. But he had not yet read that all uncivilized nations destroyed their captives. We assumed, therefore, what was false. The very selling of them implied this; for, if they would sell their captives for profit, why should they not employ them so as to receive a profit also? Nay, many of them, while there was no demand from the slave merchants, were often actually so employed. The

trade, too, had been suspended during the war; and it was never said, or thought, that any such consequence had then followed.

The honourable baronet had also said, in justification of the Slave Trade, that witchcraft commonly implied poison, and was therefore a punishable crime; but did he recollect that not only the individual accused, but that his whole family, were sold as slaves? The truth was, we stopped the natural progress of civilization in Africa. We cut her off from the opportunity of improvement. We kept her down in a state of darkness, bondage, ignorance, and bloodshed. Was not this an awful consideration for this country? Look at the map of Africa, and see how little useful intercourse had been established on that vast continent! While other countries were assisting and enlightening each other, Africa alone had none of these benefits. We had obtained as yet only so much knowledge of her productions, as to show that there was a capacity for trade, which we checked. Indeed, if the mischiefs there were out of the question, the circumstance of the Middle Passage alone would, in his mind, be reason enough for the abolition. Such a scene as that of the slave-ships passing over with their wretched cargoes to the West Indies, if it could be spread before the eyes of the House, would be sufficient of itself to make them vote in favour of it; but when it could be added, that the interest even of the West Indies themselves rested on the accomplishment of this great event, he could not conceive an act of more imperious duty, than that which was imposed upon the House, of agreeing to the present motion.

Sir Archibald Edmonstone rose, and asked whether the present motion went so far as to pledge those who voted for it to a total and immediate abolition.

Mr. Alderman Watson rose next. He defended the Slave Trade as highly beneficial to the country, being one material branch of its commerce. But he could not think of the African trade without connecting it with the West Indian. The one hung upon the other. A third important branch also depended upon it, which was the Newfoundland fishery; the latter could not go on, if it were not for the vast quantity of inferior fish bought up for the Negroes in the West Indies, and which was

quite unfit for any other market. If, therefore, we destroyed the African, we destroyed the other trades. Mr. Turgot, he said, had recommended in the National Assembly of France the gradual abolition of the Slave Trade. He would, therefore, recommend it to the House to adopt the same measure, and to soften the rigours of slavery by wholesome regulations; but an immediate abolition he could not countenance.

Mr. Fox at length rose. He observed that some expressions which he had used on the preceding day, had been complained of as too harsh and severe. He had since considered them, but he could not prevail upon himself to retract them; because, if any gentleman, after reading the evidence on the table, and attending to the debate, could avow himself an abettor of this shameful traffic in human flesh, it could only be either from some hardness of heart, or some difficulty of understanding, which he really knew not how to account for.

Some had considered this question as a question of political, whereas, it was a question of personal, freedom. Political freedom was undoubtedly a great blessing; but when it came to be compared with personal, it sunk to nothing. To confound the two, served, therefore, to render all arguments on either perplexing and unintelligible. Personal freedom was the first right of every human being. It was a right, of which he who deprived a fellow-creature was absolutely criminal in so depriving him, and which he who withheld was no less criminal in withholding. He could not, therefore, retract his words with respect to any, who (whatever respect he might otherwise have for them) should, by their vote of that night, deprive their fellow-creatures of so great a blessing. Nay, he would go further. He would say, that if the House, knowing what the trade was by the evidence, did not, by their vote, mark to all mankind their abhorrence of a practice so savage, so enormous, so repugnant to all laws human and divine, they would consign their character to eternal infamy.

That the pretence of danger to our West Indian islands from the abolition of the Slave Trade was totally unfounded, Mr. Wilberforce had abundantly proved; but if there were they who had not been satisfied with that proof, was it possible to resist

the arguments of Mr. Pitt on the same subject? It had been shown, on a comparison of the births and deaths in Jamaica, that there was not now any decrease of the slaves. But if there had been, it would have made no difference to him in his vote; for, had the mortality been ever so great there, he should have ascribed it to the system of importing Negroes, instead of that of encouraging their natural increase. Was it not evident that the planters thought it more convenient to buy them fit for work, than to breed them? Why, then, was this horrid trade to be kept up?—To give the planters truly the liberty of misusing their slaves, so as to check population: for it was from ill-usage only that, in a climate so natural to them, their numbers could diminish. The very ground, therefore, on which the planters rested the necessity of fresh importations, namely, the destruction of lives in the West Indies, was itself the strongest argument that could be given, and furnished the most imperious call upon parliament for the abolition of the trade.

Against this trade innumerable were the charges. An honourable member, Mr. Smith, had done well to introduce those tragical stories which had made such an impression upon the House. No one of these had been yet controverted. It had, indeed, been said, that the cruelty of the African captain to the child was too bad to be true; and we had been desired to look at the cross-examination of the witness, as if we should find traces of the falsehood in his testimony there. But his cross-examination was peculiarly honourable to his character; for, after he had been pressed in the closest manner by some able members of the House, the only inconsistency they could fix upon him was, whether the fact had happened on the same day of the same month of the year 1764 or the year 1765.

But it was idle to talk of the incredibility of such instances. It was not denied that absolute power was exercised by the slave-captains; and if this was granted, all the cruelties charged upon them would naturally follow. Never did he hear of charges so black and horrible as those contained in the evidence on the table. They unfolded such a scene of cruelty, that if the House, with all their present knowledge of the circumstances, should dare to

vote for its continuance, they must have nerves of which he had no conception. We might find instances, indeed, in history, of men violating the feelings of nature on extraordinary occasions. Fathers had sacrificed their sons and daughters, and husbands their wives; but to imitate their characters, we ought to have not only nerves as strong as the two Brutuses, but to take care that we had a cause as good; or that we had motives for such a dereliction of our feelings as patriotic as those which historians had annexed to these when they handed them to the notice of the world.

But what was our motive in the case before us?—to continue a trade which was a wholesale sacrifice of a whole order and race of our fellow-creatures, which carried them away by force from their native country, in order to subject them to the mere will and caprice, the tyranny and oppression of other human beings, for their whole natural lives, them and their posterity for ever! ! O most monstrous wickedness! O unparalleled barbarity! And, what was more aggravating, this most complicated scene of robbery and murder which mankind had ever witnessed, had been honoured by the name of trade.

That a number of human beings should be at all times ready to be furnished as fair articles of commerce, just as our occasions might require, was absurd. The argument of Mr. Pitt on this head was unanswerable. Our demand was fluctuating: it entirely ceased at some times: at others it was great and pressing. How was it possible, on every sudden call, to furnish a sufficient return in slaves, without resorting to those execrable means of obtaining them, which were stated in the evidence? These were of three sorts, and he would now examine them.

Captives in war, it was urged, were consigned either to death or slavery. This, however, he believed to be false in point of fact. But suppose it were true; did it not become us, with whom it was a custom, founded in the wisest policy, to pay the captives a peculiar respect and civility, to inculcate the same principles in Africa? But we were so far from doing this, that we encouraged wars for the sake of taking, not men's goods and possessions, but men themselves; and it was not the war which

was the cause of the Slave Trade, but the Slave Trade which was the cause of the war. It was the practice of the slave-merchants to try to intoxicate the African kings in order to turn them to their purpose. A particular instance occurred in the evidence of a prince, who, when sober, resisted their wishes; but in the moment of inebriety he gave the word for war, attacked the next village, and sold the inhabitants to the merchants.

The second mode was kidnapping. He referred the House to various instances of this in the evidence: but there was one in particular, from which we might immediately infer the frequency of the practice. A black trader had kidnapped a girl and sold her; but he was presently afterwards kidnapped and sold himself; and, when he asked the captain who bought him, "What! do you buy me, who am a great trader?" the only answer was, "Yes, I will buy you, or her, or anybody else, provided any one will sell you;" and accordingly both the trader and the girl were carried to the West Indies, and sold for slaves.

The third mode of obtaining slaves was by crimes committed or imputed. One of these was adultery. But was Africa the place, where Englishmen, above all others, were to go to find out and punish adultery? Did it become us to cast the first stone? It was a most extraordinary pilgrimage for a most extraordinary purpose! And yet upon this plea we justified our right of carrying off its inhabitants. The offence alleged next was witchcraft. What a reproach it was to lend ourselves to this superstition!—Yes: we stood by; we heard the trial; we knew the crime to be impossible; and that the accused must be innocent: but we waited in patient silence for his condemnation; and then we lent our friendly aid to the police of the country, by buying the wretched convict, with all his family; whom, for the benefit of Africa, we carried away also into perpetual slavery.

With respect to the situation of the slaves in their transportation, he knew not how to give the House a more correct idea of the horrors of it, than by referring them to the printed section of the slave-ship; where the eye might see what the tongue must fall short in describing. On this dismal part of the subject he would not dwell. He would only observe, that the acts of bar-

barity, related of the slave-captains in these voyages, were so extravagant, that they had been attributed in some instances to insanity. But was not this the insanity of arbitrary power? Who ever read the facts recorded of Nero without suspecting he was mad? Who would not be apt to impute insanity to Caligula —or Domitian—or Caracalla—or Commodus—or Heliogabalus? Here were six Roman emperors, not connected in blood, nor by descent, who, each of them, possessing arbitrary power, had been so distinguished for cruelty, that nothing short of insanity could be imputed to them. Was not the insanity of the masters of slave-ships to be accounted for on the same principles?

Of the slaves in the West Indies it had been said, that they were taken from a worse state to a better. An honourable member, Mr. W. Smith, had quoted some instances out of the evidence to the contrary. He also would quote one or two others. A slave under hard usage had run away. To prevent a repetition of the offence his owner sent for his surgeon, and desired him to cut off the man's leg. The surgeon refused. The owner, to render it a matter of duty in the surgeon, broke it. "Now," says he, "you must cut it off; or the man will die." We might console ourselves, perhaps, that this happened in a French island; but he would select another instance, which had happened in one of our own. Mr. Ross heard the shrieks of a female issuing from an out-house; and so piercing, that he determined to see what was going on. On looking in he perceived a young female tied up to a beam by her wrists, entirely naked, and in the act of involuntary writhing and swinging; while the author of her torture was standing below her with a lighted torch in his hand, which he applied to all the parts of her body as it approached him. What crime this miserable woman had perpetrated he knew not; but the human mind could not conceive a crime warranting such a punishment.

He was glad to see that these tales affected the House. Would they then sanction enormities, the bare recital of which made them shudder? Let them remember that humanity did not consist in a squeamish ear. It did not consist in shrinking and starting at such tales as these; but in a disposition of the heart to remedy

the evils they unfolded. Humanity belonged rather to the mind than to the nerves. But, if so, it should prompt men to charitable exertion. Such exertion was necessary in the present case. It was necessary for the credit of our jurisprudence at home, and our character abroad. For what would any man think of our justice, who should see another hanged for a crime, which would be innocence itself, if compared with those enormities, which were allowed in Africa and the West Indies under the sanction of the British parliament?

It had been said, however, in justification of the trade, that the Africans were less happy at home than in the Islands. But what right had we to be judges of their condition? They would tell us a very different tale, if they were asked. But it was ridiculous to say, that we bettered their condition, when we dragged them from everything dear in life to the most abject state of slavery.

One argument had been used, which for a subject so grave was the most ridiculous he had ever heard. Mr. Alderman Watson had declared the Slave Trade to be necessary on account of its connexion with our fisheries. But what was this but an acknowledgment of the manner, in which these miserable beings were treated? The trade was to be kept up, with all its enormities, in order that there might be persons to consume the refuse fish from Newfoundland, which was too bad for anybody else to eat.

It had been said that England ought not to abolish the Slave Trade, unless other nations would also give it up. But what kind of morality was this? The trade was defensible upon no other principle than that of a highwayman. Great Britain could not keep it upon these terms. Mere gain was not a motive for a great country to rest on, as a justification of any measure. Honour was its superior; and justice was superior to honour.

With regard to the emancipation of those in slavery, he coincided with Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Pitt; and upon this principle, that it might be as dangerous to give freedom at once to a man used to slavery, as, in the case of a man who had never

seen day-light, to expose him all at once to the full glare of a meridian sun.

With respect to the intellect and sensibility of the Africans, it was pride only, which suggested a difference between them and ourselves. There was a remarkable instance to the point in the evidence, and which he would quote. In one of the slave-ships was a person of consequence; a man, once high in a military station, and with a mind not insensible to the eminence of his rank. He had been taken captive and sold; and was then in the hold, confined promiscuously with the rest. Happening in the night to fall asleep, he dreamed that he was in his own country; high in honour and command; caressed by his family and friends; waited on by his domestics; and surrounded with all his former comforts in life. But awaking suddenly, and finding where he was, he was heard to burst into the loudest groans and lamentations on the miserable contrast of his present state; mixed with the meanest of his subjects; and subjected to the insolence of wretches a thousand times lower than himself in every kind of endowment. He appealed to the House, whether this was not as moving a picture of the miserable effects of the Slave Trade, as could be well imagined. There was one way, by which they might judge of it. Let them make the case their own. This was the Christian rule of judging; and, having mentioned Christianity, he was sorry to find that any should suppose, that it had given countenance to such a system of oppression. So far was this from being the case, that he thought it one of the most splendid triumphs of this religion, that it had caused slavery to be so generally abolished on its appearance in the world. It had done this by teaching us, among other beautiful precepts, that, in the sight of their Maker, all mankind were equal. Its influence appeared to have been more powerful in this respect than that of all the ancient systems of philosophy; though even in these, in point of theory, we might trace great liberality and consideration for human rights. Where could be found finer sentiments of liberty than in Demosthenes and Cicero?. Where bolder assertions of the rights of mankind, than in Tacitus and Thucydides? But, alas! these were the holders of slaves! It was not

so with those who had been converted to Christianity. He knew, however, that what he had been ascribing to Christianity had been imputed by others to the advances which philosophy had made. Each of the two parties took the merit to itself. The philosopher gave it to philosophy, and the divine to religion. He should not, then, dispute with either of them; but, as both coveted the praise, why should they not emulate each other by promoting this improvement in the condition of the human race?

He would now conclude by declaring, that the whole country, indeed the whole civilized world, must rejoice that such a bill as the present had been moved for, not merely as a matter of humanity, but as an act of justice; for he would put humanity out of the case. Could it be called humanity to forbear from committing murder? Exactly upon this ground did the present motion stand; being strictly a question of national justice. He thanked Mr. Wilberforce for having pledged himself so strongly to pursue his object till it was accomplished; and, as for himself, he declared, that, in whatever situation he might ever be, he would use his warmest efforts for the promotion of this righteous cause.

Mr. Stanley (the member for Lancashire) rose, and declared that, when he came into the house, he intended to vote against the abolition; but that the impression made both on his feelings and on his understanding was such, that he could not persist in his resolution. He was now convinced that the entire abolition of the Slave Trade was called for equally by sound policy and justice. He thought it right and fair to avow manfully this change in his opinion. The abolition, he was sure, could not long fail of being carried. The arguments for it were irresistible.

The Honourable Mr. Ryder said that he came to the house not exactly in the same circumstances as Mr. Stanley, but very undecided on the subject. He was, however, so strongly convinced by the arguments he had heard, that he was become equally earnest for the abolition.

Mr. Smith (member for Pontefract) said, that he should not

trouble the House at so late an hour, further than to enter his protest, in the most solemn manner, against this trade, which he considered as most disgraceful to the country, and contrary to all the principles of justice and religion.

Mr. Sumner declared himself against the total, immediate, and unqualified abolition, which he thought would wound at least the prejudices of the West Indians, and might do mischief; but a gradual abolition should have his hearty support.

Major Scott declared there was no member in the house, who would give a more independent vote upon this question than himself. He had no concern either in the African or West Indian trades; but in the present state of the finances of the country, he thought it would be a dangerous experiment to risk any one branch of our foreign commerce. As far as regulation would go, he would join in the measure.

Mr. Burke said he would use but few words. He declared that he had for a long time had his mind drawn towards this great subject. He had even prepared a bill for the regulation of the trade, conceiving at that time that the immediate abolition of it was a thing hardly to be hoped for; but when he found that Mr. Wilberforce had seriously undertaken the work, and that his motion was for the abolition, which he approved much more than his own, he had burnt his papers; and made an offering of them in honour of his nobler proposition, much in the same manner as we read, that the curious books were offered up and burnt at the approach of the Gospel. He highly applauded the confessions of Mr. Stanley and Mr. Ryder. It would be a glorious tale for them to tell their constituents, that it was impossible for them, however prejudiced, if sent to hear discussion in that House, to avoid surrendering up their hearts and judgments at the shrine of reason.

Mr. Drake said, that he would oppose the abolition to the utmost. We had, by a want of prudent conduct, lost America. The House should be aware of being carried away by the meteors with which they had been dazzled. The leaders, it was true, were for the abolition; but the minor orators, the dwarfs, the pigmies, he trusted, would that night carry the question against

them. The property of the West Indians was at stake; and, though men might be generous with their own property, they should not be so with the property of others.

Lord Sheffield reprobated the overbearing language which had been used by some gentlemen towards others, who differed in opinion from them on a subject of so much difficulty as the present. He protested against a debate, in which he could trace nothing like reason; but, on the contrary, downright phrensy, raised perhaps by the most extraordinary eloquence. The abolition, as proposed, was impracticable. He denied the right of the legislature to pass a law for it. He warned the Chancellor of the Exchequer to beware of the day, on which the bill should pass, as the worst he had ever seen.

Mr. Milnes declared, that he adopted all those expressions against the Slave Trade, which had been thought so harsh; and that the opinion of the noble lord had been turned in consequence of having become one of the members for Bristol. He quoted a passage from Lord Sheffield's pamphlet; and insisted that the separation of families in the West Indies, there complained of by himself, ought to have compelled him to take the contrary side of the question.

Mr. Wilberforce made a short reply to some arguments in the course of the debate; after which, at half-past three in the morning, the House divided. There appeared for Mr. Wilberforce's motion eighty-eight, and against it one hundred and sixty-three; so that it was lost by a majority of seventy-five votes.

By this unfavourable division the great contest, in which we had been so long engaged, was decided. We were obliged to give way to superior numbers. Our fall, however, grievous as it was, was rendered more tolerable by the circumstance of having been prepared to expect it. It was rendered more tolerable, also, by other considerations; for we had the pleasure of knowing, that we had several of the most distinguished characters in the kingdom, and almost all the splendid talents of the House of Commons*, in our favour. We knew, too, that the question had

* It is a pity that no perfect list was ever made of this or of any other division in the House of Commons on this subject. I can give, however, the

not been carried against us either by evidence or by argument; but that we were the victims of the accidents and circumstances of the times. And as these considerations comforted us, when we looked forward to future operations on this great question, so we found great consolation as to the past, in believing, that, unless human constitutions were stronger than they really were, we could not have done more than we had done towards the furtherance of the cause.

The committee for the abolition held a meeting soon after this our defeat. It was the most impressive I ever attended. The looks of all bespoke the feelings of their hearts. Little was said previously to the opening of the business; and, after it was opened, it was conducted with a kind of solemn dignity, which became the occasion. The committee, in the course of its deliberations, came to the following resolutions:—

That the thanks of this committee be respectfully given to the illustrious minority of the House of Commons, who lately stood forth the assertors of British justice and humanity, and the enemies of a traffic in the blood of man.

That our acknowledgments are particularly due to William Wilberforce, Esq., for his unwearied exertions to remove this opprobrium of our national character; and to the right honourable William Pitt, and the right honourable Charles James

names of the following members, as having voted for Mr. Wilberforce's motion at this time.

Mr. Pitt,	Lord Bayham,	Mr. Duncombe,
Mr. Fox,	Lord Arden,	Mr. Martin,
Mr. Burke,	Lord Carysfort,	Mr. Milnes,
Mr. Grey,	Lord Muncaster,	Mr. Steele,
Mr. Windham,	Lord Barnard,	Mr. Coke,
Mr. Sheridan,	Lord North,	Mr. Eliott,
Mr. Whitbread,	Lord Euston,	Mr. Montagu,
Mr. Courtenay,	General Burgoyne,	Mr. Bastard,
Mr. Francis,	Hon. R. Fitzpatrick,	Mr. Stanley,
Mr. Wilberforce,	Sir William Dolben,	Mr. Plumer,
Mr. Ryder,	Sir Henry Houghton,	Mr. Beaufoy,
Mr. William Smith,	Sir Edward Lyttleton,	Mr. I. H. Browne,
Mr. John Smyth,	Sir William Scott,	Mr. G. N. Edwards,
Mr. Robert Smith,	Mr. Samuel Thornton,	Mr. W. M. Pitt,
Mr. Powys,	Mr. Henry Thornton,	Mr. Bankes.
Lord Apsley,	Mr. Robert Thornton,	

Fox, for their virtuous and dignified co-operation in the same cause.

That the solemn declarations of these gentlemen, and of Matthew Montagu and William Smith, Esqrs., that they will not relinquish, but with life, their struggle for the abolition of the Slave Trade, are not only highly honourable to themselves as Britons, as statesmen, and as Christians, but must eventually, as the light of evidence shall be more and more diffused, be seconded by the good wishes of every man not immediately interested in the continuance of that detestable commerce.

And lastly, that anticipating the opposition they should have to sustain from persons trained to a familiarity with the rapine and desolation necessarily attendant on the Slave Trade, and sensible, also, of the prejudices which implicitly arise from long-established usages, this committee consider the late decision in the House of Commons as a delay, rather than a defeat. In addressing a free and enlightened nation on a subject, in which its justice, its humanity, and its wisdom are involved, they cannot despair of final success; and they do hereby, under an increasing conviction of the excellence of their cause, and in conformity to the distinguished examples before them, renew their firm protestation, that they will never desist from appealing to their countrymen, till the commercial intercourse with Africa shall cease to be polluted with the blood of its inhabitants.

These resolutions were published, and they were followed by a suitable report.

The committee, in order to strengthen themselves for the prosecution of their great work, elected Sir William Dolben, Bart., Henry Thornton, Lewis Alexander Grant, and Matthew Montagu, Esqrs., who were members of parliament, and Truman Harford, Josiah Wedgwood, jun., Esq., and John Clarkson, Esq., of the royal navy, as members of their own body; and they elected the Rev. Archdeacon Plymley (afterwards Corbett) an honorary and corresponding member, in consequence of the great services which he had rendered their cause in the shires of Hereford and Salop, and the adjacent counties of Wales.

The several committees, established in the country, on

receiving the resolutions and report as before mentioned, testified their sympathy in letters of condolence to that of London on the late melancholy occasion; and expressed their determination to support it as long as any vestiges of this barbarous traffic should remain.

At length the session ended; and though, in the course of it, the afflicting loss of the general question had occurred, there was yet an attempt made by the abolitionists in parliament, which met with a better fate. The Sierra Leone Company received the sanction of the Legislature. The object of this institution was to colonize a small portion of the coast of Africa. They, who were to settle there, were to have no concern in the Slave Trade, but to discourage it as much as possible. They were to endeavour to establish a new species of commerce, and to promote cultivation in its neighburhood by free labour. The persons more generally fixed upon for colonists, were such Negroes, with their wives and families, as chose to abandon their habitations in Nova Scotia. These had followed the British arms in America; and had been settled there, as a reward for their services, by the British government. My brother, just mentioned to have been chosen a member of the committee, and who had essentially served the great cause of the abolition on many occasions, undertook a visit to Nova Scotia, to see if those in question were willing to undergo the change; and in that case to provide transports, and conduct them to Sierra Leone. This object he accomplished. He embarked more than eleven hundred persons in fifteen vessels, of all which he took the command. On landing them he became the first Governor of the new colony. Having laid the foundation of it, he returned to England; when a successor was appointed. From that time many unexpected circumstances, but particularly devastations by the French in the beginning of the war, took place, which contributed to ruin the trading company which was attached to it. It is pleasing, however, to reflect, that though the object of the institution, as far as mercantile profit was concerned, thus failed, the other objects belonging to it were promoted. Schools, places of worship, agriculture, and the habits of civilized life were established.

Sierra Leone, therefore, now presents itself as the medium of civilization for Africa. And, in this latter point of view, it is worth all the treasure which has been lost in supporting it; for the Slave Trade, which was the great obstacle to this civilization, being now happily abolished, there is a metropolis, consisting of some hundreds of persons, from which may issue the seeds of reformation to this injured continent; and which, when sown, may be expected to grow into fruit without interruption. New schools may be transplanted from thence into the interior. Teachers, and travellers on discovery, may be sent from thence in various directions, who may return to it occasionally as to their homes. The natives, too, able now to travel in safety, may resort to it from various parts. They may see the improvements which are going on from time to time. They may send their children to it for education; and thus it may become the medium* of a great intercourse between England and Africa, to the benefit of each other.

* To promote this desirable end an association took place last year, called The African Institution, under the patronage of the Duke of Gloucester, as president, and of the friends to the African cause, particularly of such as were in parliament, and as belonged to the committee for the abolition of the Slave Trade.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Continuation from July 1791 to July 1792.—Author travels round the kingdom again; object of his journey.—People begin to leave off the use of sugar; to form committees; and to send petitions to Parliament.—Motion made in the House of Commons for the immediate abolition of the trade; Debates upon it; Abolition resolved upon, but not to commence till 1796.—Resolution taken to the Lords; latter determine upon hearing evidence; Evidence at length introduced; further hearing of it postponed to the next session.

The defeat which we had just sustained, was a matter of great triumph to our opponents. When they considered the majority in the House of Commons in their favour, they viewed the resolutions of the committee, which have been detailed, as the last spiteful effort of a vanquished and dying animal, and they supposed that they had consigned the question to eternal sleep. The committee, however, were too deeply attached to the cause, vanquished as they were, to desert it; and they knew, also, too well the barometer of public feeling, and the occasion of its fluctuations, to despair. In the year 1787, the members of the House of Commons, as well as the people, were enthusiastic in behalf of the abolition of the trade. In the year 1788, the fair enthusiasm of the former began to fade. In 1789, it died. In 1790, prejudice started up as a noxious weed in its place. In 1791, this prejudice arrived at its growth. But to what were these changes owing? To delay; during which the mind, having been gradually led to the question as a commercial, had been gradually taken from it as a moral object. But it was possible to restore the mind to its proper place. Add to which, that the nation had never deserted the cause during this whole period.

It is much to the honour of the English people, that they should have continued to feel for the existence of an evil which was so far removed from their sight. But at this moment their feelings began to be insupportable. Many of them resolved, as soon as parliament had rejected the bill, to abstain from the use

of West Indian produce. In this state of things, a pamphlet, written by William Bell Crafton, of Tewksbury, and called *A Sketch of the Evidence, with a Recommendation on the Subject to the serious Attention of People in general*, made its appearance; and another followed it, written by William Fox, of London, *On the Propriety of abstaining from West India Sugar and Rum.* These pamphlets took the same ground. They inculcated abstinence from these articles as a moral duty; they inculcated it as a peaceable and constitutional measure; and they laid before the reader a truth which was sufficiently obvious, that, if each would abstain, the people would have a complete remedy for this enormous evil in their own power.

While these things were going on, it devolved upon me to arrange all the evidence on the part of the abolition under proper heads, and to abridge it into one volume. It was intended that a copy of this should be sent into different towns of the kingdom, that all might know, if possible, the horrors (as far as the evidence contained them) of this execrable trade; and as it was possible that these copies might lie in the places where they were sent, without a due attention to their contents, I resolved, with the approbation of the committee, to take a journey, and for no other purpose than personally to recommend that they might be read.

The books, having been printed, were despatched before me. Of this tour I shall give the reader no other account than that of the progress of the remedy, which the people were then taking into their own hands. And first I may observe, that there was no town, through which I passed, in which there was not some one individual who had left off the use of sugar. In the smaller towns there were from ten to fifty by estimation, and in the larger from two to five hundred, who made this sacrifice to virtue. These were of all ranks and parties. Rich and poor, churchmen and dissenters, had adopted the measure. Even grocers had left off trading in the article, in some places. In gentlemen's families, where the master had set the example, the servants had often voluntarily followed it; and even children, who were capable of understanding the history of the sufferings of the Africans,

excluded, with the most virtuous resolution, the sweets, to which they had been accustomed, from their lips. By the best computation I was able to make from notes taken down in my journey, no fewer than three hundred thousand persons had abandoned the use of sugar.

Having travelled over Wales, and two-thirds of England, I found it would be impossible to visit Scotland on the same errand. I had already, by moving upwards and downwards in parallel lines, and by intersecting these in the same manner, passed over six thousand miles. By the best calculation I could make, I had yet two thousand to perform. By means of almost incessant journeyings night and day, I had suffered much in my health. My strength was failing daily. I wrote, therefore, to the committee on this subject; and they communicated immediately with Dr. Dickson; who, on being applied to, visited Scotland in my stead. He consulted first with the committee at Edinburgh relative to the circulation of the Abridgment of the Evidence. He then pursued his journey, and, in conjunction with the unwearied efforts of Mr. Campbel Haliburton, rendered essential service to the cause for this part of the kingdom.

On my return to London, I found that the committee had taken into their own body T. F. Forster, B. M. Forster, and James West, Esqrs., as members; and that they had elected Hercules Ross, Esq., an honorary and corresponding member, in consequence of the handsome manner in which he had come forward as an evidence, and of the peculiar benefit which had resulted from his testimony to the cause.

The effects of the two journeys by Dr. Dickson and myself were soon visible. The people could not bear the facts, which had been disclosed to them by the Abridgment of the Evidence. They were not satisfied, many of them, with the mere abstinence from sugar; but began to form committees to correspond with that of London. The first of these appeared at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, so early as the month of October. It consisted of the Rev. William Turner, as chairman, and of Robert Ormston, William Batson, Henry Taylor, Ralph Bainbridge, George Brown, Hadwen Bragg, David Sutton, Anthony Clapham, George Richardson,

and Edward Prowit. It received a valuable addition afterwards by the admission of many others. The second was established at Nottingham. The Rev. Jeremiah Bigsby became the president, and the Revs. G. Walker and J. Smith, and Messrs. Dennison, Evans, Watson, Hart, Storer, Bott, Hawkesley, Pennington, Wright, Frith, Hall, and Wakefield, the committee. The third was formed at Glasgow, under the patronage of David Dale, Scott Montcrieff, Robert Graham, Professor Millar, and others. Other committees started up in their turn. At length public meetings began to take place, and after this petitions to be sent to parliament; and these so generally, that there was not a day for three months, Sundays excepted, in which five or six were not resolved upon in some places or other in the kingdom.

Of the enthusiasm of the nation at this time none can form an opinion but they who witnessed it. There never was perhaps a season when so much virtuous feeling pervaded all ranks. Great pains were taken by interested persons in many places to prevent public meetings. But no efforts could avail. The current ran with such strength and rapidity, that it was impossible to stem it. In the city of London a remarkable instance occurred. The livery had been long waiting for the common council to begin a petition; but the lord mayor and several of the aldermen stifled it. The former, indignant at this conduct, insisted upon a common hall. A day was appointed; and, though the notice given of it was short, the assemblage was greater than had ever been remembered on any former occasion. Scarcely a liveryman was absent, unless sick, or previously engaged. The petition, when introduced, was opposed by those who had prevented it in the common council. But their voices were drowned amidst groans and hissings. It was shortly after carried; and it had not been signed more than half an hour, before it was within the walls of the House of Commons. The reason of this extraordinary despatch was, that it had been kept back by intrigue so late, that the very hour in which it was delivered to the House, was that in which Mr. Wilberforce was to make his new motion.

And as no petitions were ever more respectable than those presented on this occasion, as far as they breathed the voice of the

people, and as far as they were founded on a knowledge of the object which they solicited, so none were ever more numerous, as far as we have any record of such transactions. Not fewer than three hundred and ten were presented from England; one hundred and eighty-seven from Scotland; and twenty from Wales. Two other petitions also for the abolition came from England, but they were too late for delivery. On the other side of the question, one was presented from the town of Reading for regulation, in opposition to that for abolition from the same place. There were also four against abolition. The first of these was from certain persons at Derby, in opposition to the other from that town. The second was from Stephen Fuller, Esq., as agent for Jamaica. The third from J. Dawson, Esq., a slave-merchant at Liverpool. And the fourth from the merchants, planters, mortgagees, annuitants, and others concerned in the West Indian colonies. Taking in all these statements, the account stood thus:—for regulation there was one; against all abolition there were four; and for the total abolition of the trade five hundred and nineteen.

On the 2nd of April Mr. Wilberforce moved the order of the day; which having been agreed to, Sir William Dolben was put into the chair.

He then began by soliciting the candid attention of the West Indians to what he was going to deliver to the House. However others might have censured them indiscriminately, he had always himself made a distinction between them and their system. It was the latter only which he reprobated. If aristocracy had been thought a worse form of government than monarchy, because the people had many tyrants instead of one, how objectionable must be that form of it, which existed in our colonies! Arbitrary power could be bought there by any one, who could buy a slave. The fierceness of it was doubtless restrained by an elevation of mind in many, as arising from a consciousness of superior rank and consequence: but, alas! it was too often exercised there by the base and vulgar. The more liberal, too, of the planters were not resident upon their estates. Hence a promiscuous censure of them would be unjust, though their system would undoubtedly be odious.

As for the cure of this monstrous evil, he had shown, last year, that internal regulations would not produce it. These could have no effect, while the evidence of slaves was inadmissible. What would be the situation of the bulk of the people of this country, if only gentlemen of five hundred a-year were admitted as evidences in our courts of law? Neither was the cure of it in the emancipation of the slaves. He did not deny that he wished them this latter blessing. But, alas, in their present degraded state, they were unfit for it! Liberty was the child of reason and order. It was, indeed, a plant of celestial growth, but the soil must be prepared for its reception. He, who would see it flourish and bring forth its proper fruit, must not think it sufficient to let it shoot in unrestrained licentiousness. But if this inestimable blessing was ever to be imparted to them, the cause must be removed, which obstructed its introduction. In short, no effectual remedy could be found but in the abolition of the Slave Trade.

He then took a copious view of the advantages, which would arise both to the master and to the slave, if this traffic were done away; and having recapitulated and answered the different objections to such a measure, he went to that part of the subject, in which he described himself to be most interested.

He had shown, he said, last year, that Africa was exposed to all the horrors of war; and that most of these wars had their origin in the Slave Trade. It was then said, in reply, that the natural barbarity of the natives was alone sufficient to render their country a scene of carnage. This was triumphantly instanced in the King of Dahomey. But his honourable friend Lord Muncaster, then in the House, had proved in his interesting publication, which had appeared since, called *Historical Sketches of the Slave Trade, and of its Effects in Africa*, addressed to the people of Great Britain, that the very cruelties of this king, on which so much stress had been laid, were committed by him in a war, which had been undertaken expressly to punish an adjacent people for having stolen some of his subjects and sold them for slaves.

He had shown, also, last year, that kings were induced to

seize and sell their subjects, and individuals each other, in consequence of the existence of the Slave Trade.

He had shown, also, that the administration of justice was perverted, so as to become a fertile source of supply to this inhuman traffic; that every crime was punished by slavery; that false accusations were made to procure convicts; and that even the judges had a profit on the convictions.

He had shown again, that many acts of violence were perpetrated by the Europeans themselves. But he would now relate others which had happened since. The captain of an English vessel, lying in the river Cameroons, sent his boat with three sailors and a slave to get water. A Black trader seized the latter, and took him away. He alleged in his defence, that the captain owed him goods to a greater amount than the value of the slave; and that he would not pay him. This being told on board, the captain, and a part of his crew, who were compelled to blacken their naked bodies that they might appear like the natives, went on shore at midnight, armed with muskets and cutlasses. They fired on the trader's dwelling, and killed three of his children on the spot. The trader, being badly wounded, died while they were dragging him to the boat; and his wife, being wounded also, died in half an hour after she was on board the ship. Resistance having been made to these violent proceedings, some of the sailors were wounded, and one was killed.

Some weeks after this affray, a chieftain of the name of Quarmo went on board the same vessel to borrow some cutlasses and muskets. He was going, he said, into the country to make war; and the captain should have half of his booty. So well understood were the practices of the trade, that his request was granted. Quarmo, however, and his associates, finding things favourable to their design, suddenly seized the captain, threw him overboard, hauled him into their canoe, and dragged him to the shore; where another party of the natives, lying in ambush, seized such of the crew as were absent from the ship. But how did these savages behave, when they had these different persons in their power? Did they not instantly retaliate by murdering them all? No—they only obliged the captain to give an

order on the vessel to pay his debts. This fact came out only two months ago in a trial in the Court of Common Pleas—not in trial for piracy and murder, but in the trial of a civil suit, instituted by some of the poor sailors, to whom the owners refused their wages, because the natives, on account of the villanous conduct of their captain, had kept them from their vessel by detaining them as prisoners on shore. This instance, he said, proved the dreadful nature of the Slave Trade, its cruelty, its perfidy, and its effect on the Africans as well as on the Europeans, who carried it on. The cool manner in which the transaction was conducted on both sides, showed that these practices were not novel. It showed also the manner of doing business in the trade. It must be remembered, too, that these transactions were carrying on at the very time when the inquiry concerning this trade was going forward in Parliament, and whilst the witnesses of his opponents were strenuously denying not only the actual, but the possible, existence of any such depredations.

But another instance happened only in August last. Six British ships, the Thomas, Captain Philips; the Wasp, Captain Hutchinson; the Recovery, Captain Kimber, of Bristol; the Martha, Captain Houston; the Betsey, Captain Doyle; and the Amachree, (he believed,) Captain Lee, of Liverpool; were anchored off the town of Calabar. This place was the scene of a dreadful massacre about twenty years before. The captains of these vessels, thinking that the natives asked too much for their slaves, held a consultation, how they should proceed; and agreed to fire upon the town unless their own terms were complied with. On a certain evening they notified their determination to the traders; and told them, that, if they continued obstinate, they would put it into execution the next morning. In this they kept their word. They brought sixty-six guns to bear upon the town; and fired on it for three hours. Not a shot was returned. A canoe then went to offer terms of accommodation. The parties however not agreeing, the firing recommenced; more damage was done; and the natives were forced into submission. There were no certain accounts of their loss. Report said that fifty were killed; but some were seen lying badly wounded, and

others in the agonies of death, by those who went afterwards on shore.

He would now say a few words relative to the Middle Passage, principally to show, that regulation could not effect a cure of the evil there. Mr. Isaac Wilson had stated in his evidence, that the ship, in which he sailed, only three years ago, was of three hundred and seventy tons; and that she carried six hundred and two slaves. Of these she lost one hundred and fifty-five. There were three or four other vessels in company with her, and which belonged to the same owners. One of these carried four hundred and fifty, and buried two hundred; another carried four hundred and sixty-six, and buried seventy-three; another five hundred and forty-six, and buried one hundred and fifty-eight; and from the four together, after the landing of their cargoes, two hundred and twenty died. He fell in with another vessel, which had lost three hundred and sixty-two; but the number, which had been bought, was not specified. Now if to these actual deaths, during and immediately after the voyage, we were to add the subsequent loss in the seasoning, and to consider that this would be greater than ordinary in cargoes which were landed in such a sickly state, we should find a mortality, which, if it were only general for a few months, would entirely depopulate the globe.

But he would advert to what Mr. Wilson said, when examined, as a surgeon, as to the causes of these losses, and particularly on board his own ship, where he had the means of ascertaining them. The substance of his reply was this—That most of the slaves laboured under a fixed melancholy, which now and then broke out into lamentations and plaintive songs, expressive of the loss of their relations, friends, and country. So powerfully did this sorrow operate, that many of them attempted in various ways to destroy themselves, and three actually effected it. Others obstinately refused to take sustenance; and when the whip and other violent means were used to compel them to eat, they looked up in the face of the officer, who unwillingly executed this painful task, and said, with a smile, in their own language, "Presently we shall be no more." This, their unhappy state of

mind, produced a general languor and debility, which were increased in many instances by an unconquerable aversion to food, arising partly from sickness, and partly, to use the language of the slave-captains, from sulkiness. These causes naturally produced the flux. The contagion spread; several were carried off daily; and the disorder, aided by so many powerful auxiliaries, resisted the power of medicine. And it is worth while to remark, that these grievous sufferings were not owing either to want of care on the part of the owners, or to any negligence or harshness of the captain; for Mr. Wilson declared, that his ship was as well fitted out, and the crew and slaves as well treated, as anybody could reasonably expect.

He would now go to another ship. That, in which Mr. Claxton sailed as a surgeon, afforded a repetition of all the horrid circumstances which had been described. Suicide was attempted, and effected; and the same barbarous expedients were adopted to compel the slaves to continue an existence, which they considered as too painful to be endured. The mortality, also, was as great. And yet here, again, the captain was in no wise to blame. But this vessel had sailed since the regulating act. Nay, even in the last year, the deaths on shipboard would be found to have been between ten and eleven per cent. on the whole number exported. In truth, the House could not reach the cause of this mortality by all their regulations. Until they could cure a broken heart—until they could legislate for the affections, and bind by their statutes the passions and feelings of the mind, their labour would be in vain.

Such were the evils of the Passage. But evils were conspicuous everywhere in this trade. Never was there, indeed, a system so replete with wickedness and cruelty. To whatever part of it we turned our eyes, whether to Africa, the Middle Passage, or the West Indies, we could find no comfort, no satisfaction, no relief. It was the gracious ordinance of Providence, both in the natural and moral world, that good should often arise out of evil. Hurricanes cleared the air; and the propagation of truth was promoted by persecution. Pride, vanity, and profusion contributed often, in their remoter consequences, to the happiness

of mankind. In common, what was in itself evil and vicious, was permitted to carry along with it some circumstances of palliation. The Arab was hospitable; the robber brave. We did not necessarily find cruelty associated with fraud, or meanness with injustice. But here the case was far otherwise. It was the prerogative of this detested traffic to separate from evil its concomitant good, and to reconcile discordant mischiefs. It robbed war of its generosity; it deprived peace of its security: we saw in it the vices of polished society, without its knowledge or its comforts; and the evils of barbarism without its simplicity. No age, no sex, no rank, no condition, was exempt from the fatal influence of this wide-wasting calamity. Thus it attained to the fullest measure of pure, unmixed, unsophisticated wickedness; and, scorning all competition and comparison, it stood without a rival in the secure, undisputed, possession of its detestable pre-eminence.

But, after all this, wonderful to relate, this execrable traffic had been defended on the ground of benevolence! It had been said, that the slaves were captives and convicts, who, if we were not to carry them away, would be sacrificed, and many of them at the funerals of people of rank, according to the savage custom of Africa. He had shown, however, that our supplies of slaves were obtained from other quarters than these. But he would wave this consideration for the present. Had it not been acknowledged by his opponents that the custom of ransoming slaves prevailed in Africa? With respect to human sacrifices, he did not deny that there might have been some instances of these; but they had not been proved to be more frequent than amongst other barbarous nations; and, where they existed, being acts of religion, they would not be dispensed with for the sake of commercial gain. In fact, they had nothing to do with the Slave Trade; only perhaps, if it were abolished, they might, by means of the civilization which would follow, be done away.

But, exclusively of these sacrifices, it had been asserted, that it was kindness to the inhabitants to take them away from their own country. But what said the historians of Africa, long before the question of the abolition was started? "Axim," says Bos-

man, "is cultivated, and abounds with numerous large and beautiful villages: its inhabitants are industriously employed in trade, fishing, or agriculture."—"The inhabitants of Adom always expose large quantities of corn to sale, besides what they want for their own use."—"The people of Acron husband their grounds and time so well, that every year produces a plentiful harvest." Speaking of the Fetu country, he says,—"Frequently, when walking through it, I have seen it abound with fine well-built and populous towns, agreeably enriched with vast quantities of corn and cattle, palm-wine, and oil. The inhabitants all apply themselves, without distinction, to agriculture; some sow corn; others press oil, and draw wine from the palm-trees."

Smith, who was sent out by the royal African company in 1726, assures us, "that the discerning natives account it their greatest unhappiness, that they were ever visited by the Europeans. They say that we Christians introduced the traffic of slaves; and that before our coming they lived in peace. But, say they, it is observable, wherever Christianity comes, there come swords and guns, and powder and ball, with it."

"The Europeans," says Bruce, "are far from desiring to act as peace-makers among them. It would be too contrary to their interests; for the only object of their wars is to carry off slaves; and, as these form the principal part of their traffic, they would be apprehensive of drying up the source of it, were they to encourage the people to live well together."

"The neighbourhood of the Damel and Tin keep them perpetually at war, the benefit of which accrues to the Company, who buy all the prisoners made on either side; and the more there are to sell, the greater is their profit; for the only end of their armaments is to make captives, to sell them to the white traders."

Artus, of Dantzic, says, that in his time "those liable to pay fines were banished till the fine was paid; when they returned to their houses and possessions."

Bosman affirms, "that formerly all crimes in Africa were compensated by fine or restitution, and, where restitution was impracticable, by corporal punishment."

Moore says, "Since this trade has been used, all punishments have been changed into slavery. There being an advantage in such condemnation, they strain the crimes very hard, in order to get the benefit of selling the criminal. Not only murder, theft, and adultery, are punished by selling the criminal for a slave, but every trifling crime is punished in the same manner."

Loyer affirms that "the King of Sain, on the least pretence, sells his subjects for European goods. He is so tyrannically severe, that he makes a whole village responsible for the fault of one inhabitant; and on the least offence sells them all for slaves."

Such, he said, were the testimonies, not of persons whom he had summoned; not of friends of the abolition; but of men who were themselves, many of them, engaged in the Slave Trade. Other testimonies might be added; but these were sufficient to refute the assertions of his opponents, and to show the kind services we had done to Africa by the introduction of this trade.

He would just touch upon the argument, so often repeated, that other nations would carry on the Slave Trade, if we abandoned it. But how did we know this? Had not Denmark given a noble example to the contrary? She had consented to abolish the trade in ten years; and had she not done this, even though we, after an investigation for nearly five years, had ourselves hung back? But what might not be expected, if we were to take up the cause in earnest; if we were to proclaim to all nations the injustice of the trade, and to solicit their concurrence in the abolition of it! He hoped the representatives of the nation would not be less just than the people. The latter had stepped forward, and expressed their sense more generally by petitions, than in any instance in which they had ever before interfered. To see this great cause thus triumphing over distinctions and prejudices was a noble spectacle. Whatever might be said of our political divisions, such a sight had taught us that there were subjects still beyond the reach of party; that there was a point of elevation, where we ascended above the jarring of the discordant elements, which ruffled and agitated the vale below. In our ordinary atmosphere clouds and vapours obscured the air, and we were the sport of a thousand conflicting

winds and adverse currents; but here we moved in a higher region, where all was pure and clear, and free from perturbation and discomposure:

> As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
> Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm;
> Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
> Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Here then, on this august eminence, he hoped we should build the Temple of Benevolence; that we should lay its foundation deep in Truth and Justice; and that we should inscribe upon its gates, "Peace and Good Will to Men." Here we should offer the first-fruits of our benevolence, and endeavour to compensate, if possible, for the injuries we had brought upon our fellow-men.

He would only now observe, that his conviction of the indispensable necessity of immediately abolishing this trade remained as strong as ever. Let those who talked of allowing three or four years to the continuance of it, reflect on the disgraceful scenes which had passed last year. As for himself, he would wash his hands of the blood which would be spilled in this horrid interval. He could not, however, but believe, that the hour was come, when we should put a final period to the existence of this cruel traffic. Should he unhappily be mistaken, he would never desert the cause; but to the last moment of his life he would exert his utmost powers in its support. He would now move, "That it is the opinion of this committee, that the trade carried on by British subjects for the purpose of obtaining slaves on the coast of Africa, ought to be abolished."

Mr. Baillie was in hopes that the friends of the abolition would have been contented with the innocent blood which had been already shed. The great island of St. Domingo had been torn to pieces by insurrections. The most dreadful barbarities had been perpetrated there. In the year 1789, the imports into it exceeded five millions sterling. The exports from it in the same year amounted to six millions; and the trade employed three hundred thousand tons of shipping, and thirty thousand seamen. This fine island, thus advantageously situated, had been lost in consequence of the agitation of the question of the

Slave Trade. Surely so much mischief ought to have satisfied those who supported it; but they required the total destruction of all the West Indian colonies, belonging to Great Britain, to complete the ruin.

The honourable gentleman, who had just spoken, had dwelt upon the enormities of the Slave Trade. He was far from denying that many acts of inhumanity might accompany it; but as human nature was much the same everywhere, it would be unreasonable to expect among African traders, or the inhabitants of our islands, a degree of perfection in morals, which was not to be found in Great Britain itself. Would any man estimate the character of the English nation by what was to be read in the records of the Old Bailey? He himself, however, had lived sixteen years in the West Indies, and he could bear testimony to the general good usage of the slaves.

Before the agitation of this impolitic question the slaves were contented with their situation. There was a mutual confidence between them and their masters: and this continued to be the case till the new doctrines were broached. But now depôts of arms were necessary on every estate; and the scene was totally reversed. Nor was their religious then inferior to their civil state. When the English took possession of Grenada, where his property lay, they found them baptized and instructed in the principles of the Roman Catholic faith. The priests of that persuasion had indeed been indefatigable in their vocation; so that imported Africans generally obtained within twelve months a tolerable idea of their religious duties. He had seen the slaves there go through the public mass in a manner, and with a fervency, which would have done credit to more civilized societies. But the case was now altered; for, except where the Moravians had been, there was no trace in our islands of an attention to their religious interests.

It had been said that their punishments were severe. There might be instances of cruelty; but these were not general. Many of them were undoubtedly ill disposed; though not more, according to their number, on a plantation, than in a regiment, or in a ship's crew. Had we never heard of seamen being flogged from

ship to ship, or of soldiers dying in the very act of punishment? Had we not also heard, even in this country of boasted liberty, of seamen being seized, and carried away, when returning from distant voyages, after an absence of many years; and this without even being allowed to see their wives and families? As to distressed objects, he maintained, that there was more wretchedness and poverty in St. Giles's, than in all the West Indian islands belonging to Great Britain.

He would now speak of the African and West Indian trades. The imports and exports of these amounted to upwards of ten millions annually; and they gave employment to three hundred thousand tons of shipping, and to about twenty-five thousand seamen. These trades had been sanctioned by our ancestors in parliament. The acts for this purpose might be classed under three heads. First, they were such as declared the colonies, and the trade thereof, advantageous to Great Britain, and therefore entitled to her protection. Secondly, such as authorized, protected, and encouraged the trade to Africa, as advantageous in itself, and necessary to the welfare and existence of the sugar colonies: and, Thirdly, such as promoted and secured loans of money to the proprietors of the said colonies, either from British subjects, or from foreigners. These acts*, he apprehended, ought to satisfy every person of the legality and usefulness of these trades. They were enacted in reigns distinguished for the production of great and enlightened characters. We heard then of no wild and destructive doctrines like the present. These were reserved for this age of novelty and innovation. But he must remind the House, that the inhabitants of our islands had as good a right to the protection of their property, as the inhabitants of Great Britain. Nor could it be diminished in any shape without full compensation. The proprietors of lands in the ceded islands, which were purchased of government under specific conditions of settlement, ought to be indemnified. They also (of whom he was one), who had purchased the territory granted by the crown to General Monkton, in the Island of St. Vincent, ought to be indemnified also. The sale of this had

* Here he quoted them specifically.

gone on briskly, till it was known that a plan was in agitation for the abolition of the Slave Trade. Since that period, the original purchasers had done little or nothing, and they had many hundred acres on hand, which would be of no value, if the present question was carried. In fact, they had a right to compensation. The planters generally spent their estates in this country. They generally educated their children in it. They had never been found seditious or rebellious; and they demanded of the Parliament of Great Britain that protection, which, upon the principles of good faith, it was in duty bound to afford them in common with the rest of his majesty's loyal subjects.

Mr. Vaughan stated that, being a West Indian by birth, and connected with the islands, he could speak from his own knowledge. In the early part of his life he was strongly in favour of the abolition of the Slave Trade. He had been educated by Dr. Priestley, and the father of Mrs. Barbauld; who were both of them friends to that question. Their sentiments he had imbibed; but, although bred at the feet of Gamaliel, he resolved to judge for himself, and he left England for Jamaica.

He found the situation of the slaves much better than he had imagined. Setting aside liberty, they were as well off as the the poor in Europe. They had little want of clothes or fuel; they had a house and garden found them, were never imprisoned for debts, nor deterred from marrying through fear of being unable to support a family; their orphans and widows were taken care of, as they themselves were when old and disabled; they had medical attendance without expense; they had private property, which no master ever took from them; and they were resigned to their situation, and looked for nothing beyond it. Perhaps persons might have been prejudiced by living in the towns, to which slaves were often sent for punishment; and where there were many small proprietors; or by seeing no negro otherwise than as belonging to the labouring poor; but they appeared to him to want nothing but liberty; and it was only occasionally that they were abused.

There were two prejudices with respect to the colonies, which he would notice. The first was, that cruel usage occasioned the

inequality of births and deaths among the slaves. But did cruelty cause the excess of deaths above births in the city of London? No—this excess had other causes. So it had among the slaves. Of these more males were imported than females: they were dissolute too in their morals; they had also diseases peculiar to themselves. But in those islands where they nearly kept up their numbers, there was this difficulty, that the equality was preserved by the increase on one estate compensating for the decrease on another. These estates, however, would not interchange their numbers; whereas, where freedom prevailed, the free labourers circulated from one employer to another, and appeared wherever they were wanted.

The second was, that all chastisement of the slaves was cruelty. But this was not true. Their owners generally withdrew them from public justice; so that they, who would have been publicly executed elsewhere, were often kept alive by their masters, and were found punished again and again for repeating their faults. Distributive justice occasioned many punishments; as one slave was to be protected against every other slave: and, when one pilfered from another, then the master interfered. These punishments were to be distinguished from such as arose from enforcing labour, or from the cruelty of their owners. Indeed he had gone over the islands, and he had seen but little ill usage. He had seen none on the estate where he resided. The whip, the stocks, and confinement, were all the modes of punishment he had observed in other places. Some slaves belonging to his father were peculiarly well off. They saved money, and spent it in their own way.

But notwithstanding all he had said, he allowed that there was room for improvement; and particularly for instilling into the slaves the principles of religion. Where this should be realized, there would be less punishment, more work, more marriages, more issue, and more attachment to masters. Other improvements would be the establishment of medical societies; the introduction of task-work; and grants of premiums and honorary distinctions both to fathers and mothers, according to the number of children which they should rear. Besides this, Negro evidence

should be allowed in the courts of law, it being left to the discretion of the court or jury to take or reject it, according to the nature of the case. Cruel masters also should be kept in order in various ways. They should be liable to have their slaves taken from them, and put in trust. Every instrument of punishment should be banished, except the whip. The number of lashes should be limited; and the punishment should not be repeated till after intervals. These and other improvements should be immediately adopted by the planters. The character of the exemplary among them was hurt by being confounded with that of lower and baser men. He concluded by stating, that the owners of slaves were entitled to compensation, if, by means of the abolition, they should not be able to find labourers for the cultivation of their lands*.

Mr. Henry Thornton conceived, that the two last speakers had not spoken to the point. The first had described the happy state of the slaves in the West Indies. The latter had made similar representations; but yet had allowed, that much improvement might be made in their condition. But this had nothing to do with the question then before them. The manner of procuring slaves in Africa was the great evil to be remedied. Africa was to be stripped of its inhabitants to supply a population for the West Indies. There was a Dutch proverb, which said, "My son, get money, honestly if you can—but get money:" or, in other words, "Get slaves, honestly if you can—but get slaves." This was the real grievance; and the two honourable gentlemen, by confining their observations to the West Indies, had entirely overlooked it.

Though this evil had been fully proved, he could not avoid stating to the House some new facts, which had come to his knowledge as a director of the Sierra Leone Company, and which would still further establish it. The consideration, that they had taken place since the discussion of the last year on this subject, obliged him to relate them.

* Mr. Vaughan declared in a future stage of the debate, that he wished to see a prudent termination both of the Slave Trade and of slavery; and that, though he was the eldest son of his father, he never would, on any consideration, become the owner of a slave.

Mr. Falconbridge, agent to the Company, sitting one evening in Sierra Leone, heard a shout, and immediately afterwards the report of a gun. Fearing an attack, he armed forty of the settlers, and rushed with them to the place from whence the noise came. He found a poor wretch, who had been crossing from a neighbouring village, in the possession of a party of kidnappers, who were tying his hands. Mr. Falconbridge, however, dared not rescue him, lest, in the defenceless state of his own town, retaliation might be made upon him.

At another time a young woman, living half a mile off, was sold, without any criminal charge, to one of the slave-ships. She was well acquainted with the agent's wife, and had been with her only the day before. Her cries were heard; but it was impossible to relieve her.

At another time a young lad, one of the free settlers who went from England, was caught by a neighbouring chief, as he was straggling alone from home, and sold for a slave. The pretext was, that some one in the town of Sierra Leone had committed an offence. Hence the first person belonging to it, who could be seized, was to be punished. Happily the free settlers saw him in his chains; and they recovered him, before he was conveyed to the ship.

To mark still more forcibly the scenes of misery, to which the Slave Trade gave birth, he would mention a case stated to him in a letter by King Naimbanna. It had happened to this respectable person, in no less than three instances, to have some branches of his family kidnapped, and carried off to the West Indies. At one time three young men, Corpro, Banna, and Marbrour, were decoyed on board a Danish slave-ship, under pretence of buying something, and were taken away. At another time another relation piloted a vessel down the river. He begged to be put on shore, when he came opposite to his own town; but he was pressed to pilot her to the river's mouth. The captain then pleaded the impracticability of putting him on shore; carried him to Jamaica; and sold him for a slave. Fortunately, however, by means of a letter, which was conveyed there, the man, by the assistance of the governor, was sent back to Sierra

Leone. At another time another relation was also kidnapped. But he had not the good fortune, like the former, to return.

He would mention one other instance. A son had sold his own father, for whom he obtained a considerable price: for, as the father was rich in domestic slaves, it was not doubted that he would offer largely for his ransom. The old man accordingly gave twenty-two of these in exchange for himself. The rest, however, being from that time filled with apprehensions of being on some ground or other sold to the slave-ships, fled to the mountains of Sierra Leone, where they now dragged on a miserable existence. The son himself was sold, in his turn, soon after. In short, the whole of that unhappy peninsula, as he learnt from eye-witnesses, had been desolated by the trade in slaves. Towns were seen standing without inhabitants all over the coast; in several of which the agent of the Company had been. There was nothing but distrust among the inhabitants. Every one, if he stirred from home, felt himself obliged to be armed.

Such was the nature of the Slave Trade. It had unfortunately obtained the name of a trade; and many had been deceived by the appellation; but it was war, and not trade. It was a mass of crimes, and not commerce. It was that which prevented the introduction of a trade in Africa; for it was only by clearing and cultivating the lands, that the climate could be made healthy for settlements; but this wicked traffic, by dispersing the inhabitants, and causing the lands to remain uncultivated, made the coast unhealthy to Europeans. He had found, in attempting to establish a colony there, that it was an an obstacle which opposed itself to him in innumerable ways; it created more embarrassments than all the natural impediments of the country; and it was more hard to contend with than any difficulties of climate, soil, or natural disposition of the people.

He would say a few words relative to the numerous petitions which were then on the table of the House. They had shown, in an extraordinary manner, the opinion of the people. He did not wish to turn this into a constitutional question; but he would observe, that it was of the utmost consequence to the maintenance of the constitution of this country, that the reputa-

tion of parliament should be maintained. But nothing could prejudice its character so much, as a vote, which should lead the people to believe that the legislative body was the more corrupt part of it, and that it was slow to adopt moral principles.

It had been often insinuated that parliament, by interfering in this trade, departed from its proper functions. No idea could be more absurd; for, was it not its duty to correct abuses? and what abuses were greater than robbery and murder? He was, indeed, anxious for the abolition. He desired it, as a commercial man, on account of the commercial character of the country. He desired it for the reputation of parliament, on which so materially depended the preservation of our happy constitution; but most of all he prayed for it for the sake of those eternal principles of justice, which it was the duty of nations, as well as of individuals, to support.

Colonel Tarleton repeated his arguments of the last year. In addition to these he inveighed bitterly against the abolitionists, as a junto of secretaries, sophists, enthusiasts, and fanatics. He condemned the abolition as useless, unless other nations would take it up. He brought to the recollection of the House the barbarous scenes which had taken place in St. Domingo, all of which, he said, had originated in the discussion of this question. He described the alarms, in which the inhabitants of our own islands were kept, lest similar scenes should occur from the same cause. He ridiculed the petitions on the table. Itinerant clergymen, mendicant physicians, and others, had extorted signatures from the sick, the indigent, and the traveller. School-boys were invited to sign them, under the promise of a holiday. He had letters to produce, which would prove all these things, though he was not authorized to give up the names of those who had written them.

Mr. Montagu said, that, in the last session, he had simply entered his protest against the trade; but now he could be no longer silent; and as there were many, who had conceived regulation to be more desirable than abolition, he would confine himself to that subject.

Regulation, as it related to the manner of procuring slaves,

was utterly impossible; for how could we know the case of each individual, whom we forced away into bondage? Could we establish tribunals all along the coast, and in every ship, to find it out? What judges could we get for such an office? But, if this could not be done upon the coast, how could we ascertain the justness of the captivity of by far the greatest number, who were brought from immense distances inland?

He would not dwell upon the proof of the inefficiency of regulations, as to the Middle Passage. His honourable friend, Mr. Wilberforce, had shown, that, however the mortality might have been lessened in some ships by the regulations of Sir William Dolben, yet, wherever a contagious disorder broke out, the greatest part of the cargo was swept away. But what regulations by the British parliament could prevent these contagions, or remove them suddenly, when they appeared?

Neither would regulations be effectual, as they related to the protection of the slaves in the West Indies. It might, perhaps, be enacted, as Mr. Vaughan had suggested, that their punishments should be moderate; and that the number of lashes should be limited. But the colonial legislatures had already done as much, as the magic of words alone could do, upon this subject; yet the evidence upon the table clearly proved, that the only protection of slaves was in the clemency of their masters. Any barbarity might be exercised with impunity, provided no White person were to see it, though it happened in the sight of a thousand slaves. Besides, by splitting the offence, and inflicting the punishment at intervals, the law could be evaded, although the fact was within the reach of the evidence of a White man. Of this evasion Captain Cook, of the 89th regiment, had given a shocking instance; and Chief Justice Ottley had candidly confessed, that "he could devise no method of bringing a master, so offending, to justice, while the evidence of the slave continued inadmissible." But perhaps councils of protection, and guardians of the slaves, might be appointed. This, again, was an expedient which sounded well, but which would be nugatory and absurd. What person would risk the comfort of his life by the exercise of so invidious an interference? But supposing that

one or two individuals could be found, who would sacrifice all their time, and the friendship of their associates, for the good of the slaves; what could they effect? Could they be in all places at once? But even if acts of barbarity should be related to them, how were they to come at the proof of them?

It appeared, then, that no regulations could be effectual until the slaves were admitted to give their evidence; but to admit them to this privilege in their present state, would be to endanger the safety and property of their masters. Mr. Vaughan had, however, recommended this measure with limitations, but it would produce nothing but discontent; for how were the slaves to be persuaded that it was fit they should be admitted to speak the truth, and then be disbelieved and disregarded? What a fermentation would such conduct naturally excite in men dismissed with injuries unredressed, though abundantly proved, in their apprehension, by their testimony? In fact, no regulations would do. There was no cure for these evils, but in the abolition of the Slave Trade. He called upon the planters to concur with his honourable friend, Mr. Wilberforce, in this great measure. He wished them to consider the progress which the opinion of the injustice of this trade was making in the nation at large, as manifested by the petitions; which had almost obstructed the proceedings of the House by their perpetual introduction. It was impossible for them to stifle this great question. As for himself, he would renew his profession of last year, that he would never cease, but with life, to promote so glorious an end.

Mr. Whitbread said, that even if he could conceive, that the trade was, as some had asserted it to be, founded on principles of humanity; that the Africans were rescued from death in their own country; that, upon being carried to the West Indies, they were put under kind masters; that their labour there was easy; that at evening they returned cheerful to their homes; that in sickness they were attended with care; and that their old age was rendered comfortable; even then he would vote for the abolition of the Slave Trade, inasmuch as he was convinced that that which was fundamentally wrong, no practice could justify.

No eloquence could persuade him, that the Africans were

torn from their country and their dearest connexions, merely that they might lead a happier life; or that they could be placed under the uncontrolled dominion of others without suffering. Arbitrary power would spoil the hearts of the best; hence would arise tyranny on the one side, and a sense of injury on the other. Hence the passions would be let loose, and a state of perpetual enmity would follow.

He needed only to go to the accounts of those who defended the system of slavery, to show that it was cruel. He was forcibly struck last year by an expression of an honourable member, an advocate for the trade, who, when he came to speak of the slaves, on selling off the stock of a plantation, said that they fetched less than the common price, because they were damaged. Damaged! What! Were they goods and chattels? What an idea was this to hold out of our fellow-creatures! We might imagine how slaves were treated, if they could be spoken of in such a manner. Perhaps these unhappy people had lingered out the best part of their lives in the service of their master. Able then to do but little, they were sold for little! and the remaining substance of their sinews was to be pressed out by another, yet more hardened than the former, and who had made a calculation of their vitals accordingly.

As another proof, he would mention a passage in a pamphlet, in which the author, describing the happy situation of the slaves, observed, that a good negro never wanted a character; a bad one could always be detected by his weals and scars.' What was this but to say, that there were instruments in use which left indelible marks behind them; and who would say that these were used justly?

An honourable gentleman, Mr. Vaughan, had said, that setting aside slavery, the slaves were better off than the poor in this country. But what was it that we wished to abolish? Was it not the Slave Trade, which would destroy in time the cruel distinction he had mentioned? The same honourable gentleman had also expressed his admiration of their resignation; but might it not be that resignation which was the consequence of despair?

Colonel Tarleton had insinuated that the petitions on the

table had been obtained in an objectionable manner. He had the honour to present one from his constituents, which he would venture to say had originated with themselves, and that there did not exist more respectable names in the kingdom than those of the persons who had signed it. He had also asserted, that there was a strong similitude in their tenour and substance, as if they had been manufactured by the same persons. This was by no means to be wondered at. There was surely but one plain tale to tell, and it was not surprising that it had been clothed in nearly the same expressions. There was but one boon to ask, and that was—the abolition of this wicked trade.

It had been said by another, (Mr. Baillie,) that the horrible insurrections in St. Domingo arose from the discussion of the question of the Slave Trade. He denied the assertion; and maintained that they were the effect of the trade itself. There was a point of endurance, beyond which human nature could not go, at which the mind of man rose by its native elasticity with a spring and violence proportioned to the degree to which it had been depressed. The calamities in St. Domingo proceeded from the Slave Trade alone; and, if it were continued, similar evils were to be apprehended in our own islands. The cruelties which the slaves had perpetrated in that unfortunate colony they had learnt from their masters. Had not an African eyes? Had he not ears? Had he not organs, senses, and passions? If you pricked him, would he not feel the puncture, and bleed? If you poisoned him, would he not die? and, if you wronged him, would he not revenge? But he had said sufficient, for he feared he could not better the instruction.

Mr. Milbank would only just observe, that the policy of the measure of the abolition was as great as its justice was undeniable. Where slavery existed, everything was out of its natural place. All improvement was at an end; there must also, from the nature of the human heart, be oppression. He warned the planters against the danger of fresh importations, and invited their concurrence in the measure.

Mr. Dundas (afterwards Viscount Melville) declared that he had always been a warm friend to the abolition of the Slave

Trade, though he differed from Mr. Wilberforce as to the mode of effecting it.

The abolitionists, and those on the opposite side of the question, had, both of them, gone into extremes. The former were for the immediate and abrupt annihilation of the trade; the latter considered it as essentially necessary to the existence of the West Indian islands, and therefore laid it down that it was to be continued for ever. Such was the vast distance between the parties. He would now address himself to each.

He would say first, that he agreed with his honourable friend, Mr. Wilberforce, in very material points. He believed the trade was not founded in policy; that the continuation of it was not essential to the preservation of our trade with the West Indian islands; and that the slaves were not only to be maintained, but increased there, by natural population. He agreed, too, as to the propriety of the abolition. But when his honourable friend talked of direct and abrupt abolition, he would submit it to him, whether he did not run counter to the prejudices of those who were most deeply interested in the question; and whether, if he could obtain his object without wounding these, it would not be better to do it? Did he not also forget the sacred attention which parliament had ever shown to the private interests and patrimonial rights of individuals?

Whatever idea men might then have of the African trade, certain it was that they, who had connected themselves with it, had done it under the sanction of parliament. It might also be well worth while to consider, (though the conduct of other nations ought not to deter us from doing our duty,) whether British subjects in the West Indies might not be supplied with slaves under neutral flags. Now he believed it was possible to avoid these objections, and at the same time to act in harmony with the prejudices which had been mentioned. This might be done by regulations, by which we should effect the end much more speedily than by the way proposed. By regulations, he meant such as would increase the breed of the slaves in the West Indies; such as would ensure a moral education to their children; and such as would even in time extinguish hereditary slavery.

The extinction, however, of this was not to be effected by allowing the son of an African slave to obtain his freedom on the death of his parent. Such a son should be considered as born free; he should then be educated at the expense of the person importing his parents; and, when arrived at such a degree of strength as might qualify him to labour, he should work for a term of years for the payment of the expense of his education and maintenance. It was impossible to emancipate the existing slaves at once; nor would such an emancipation be of any immediate benefit to themselves; but this observation would not apply to their descendants, if trained and educated in the manner he had proposed.

He would now address himself to those who adopted the opposite extreme; and he thought he should not assume too much when he said, that if both slavery and the Slave Trade could be abolished with safety to their property, it deeply concerned their interests to do it. Such a measure, also, would only be consistent with the principles of the British constitution. It was surely strange that we, who were ourselves free, should carry on a Slave Trade with Africa, and that we should never think of introducing cultivation into the West Indies by free labourers.

That such a measure would tend to their interest he had no doubt. Did not all of them agree with Mr. Long, that the great danger in the West Indies arose from the importation of the African slaves there? Mr. Long had asserted, that all the insurrections there arose from these. If this statement was true, how directly it bore upon the present question! But we were told, also, by the same author, that the Slave Trade gave rise to robbery, murder, and all kinds of depredations on the coast of Africa. Had this been answered? No: except indeed it had been said that the slaves were such as had been condemned for crimes. Well, then, the imported Africans consisted of all the convicts, rogues, thieves, and vagabonds in Africa. But would the West Indians choose to depend on fresh supplies of these for the cultivation of their lands, and the security of their islands, when it was also found that every insurrection had arisen from them? It was plain the safety of the islands was concerned in this ques-

tion. There would be danger so long as the trade lasted. The planters were, by these importations, creating the engines of their own destruction. Surely they would act more to their own interest if they would concur in extinguishing the trade, than by standing up for its continuance.

He would now ask them, what right they had to suppose that Africa would for ever remain in a state of barbarism. If once an enlightened prince were to rise up there, his first act would be to annihilate the Slave Trade. If the light of heaven were ever to descend upon that continent, it would directly occasion its downfall. It was their interest then to contrive a mode of supplying labour, without trusting to precarious importations from that quarter. They might rest assured that the trade could not continue. He did not allude to the voice of the people in the petitions then lying on the table of the House; but he knew certainly, that an idea not only of the injustice, but of the impolicy, of this trade had been long entertained by men of the most enlightened understandings in this country. Was it then a prudent thing for them to rest on this commerce for the further improvement of their property?

There was a species of slavery, prevailing only a few years ago, in the collieries in certain boroughs in Scotland. Emancipation there was thought a duty by parliament: but what an opposition there was to the measure! Nothing but ruin would be the consequence of it! After several years struggle the bill was carried. Within a year after, the ruin so much talked of vanished in smoke, and there was an end of the business. It had also been contended that Sir William Dolben's bill would be the ruin of Liverpool: and yet one of its representatives had allowed, that this bill had been of benefit to the owners of the slave-vessels there. Was he then asking too much of the West Indians, to request a candid consideration of the real ground of their alarms? He would conclude by stating, that he meant to propose a middle way of proceeding. If there was a number of members in the House, who thought with him, that this trade ought to be ultimately abolished, but yet by moderate measures, which should neither invade the property nor the prejudices of individuals, he

wished them to unite, and they might then reduce the question to its proper limits.

Mr. Addington, the speaker, (now Viscount Sidmouth,) professed himself to be one of those moderate persons called upon by Mr. Dundas. He wished to see some middle measure suggested. The fear of doing injury to the property of others, had hitherto prevented him from giving an opinion against a system, the continuance of which he could not countenance.

He utterly abhorred the Slave Trade. A noble and learned lord, who had now retired from the bench, said on a certain occasion, that he pitied the loyalty of that man, who imagined that any epithet could aggravate the crime of treason. So he himself knew of no language which could aggravate the crime of the Slave Trade. It was sufficient for every purpose of crimination, to assert, that man thereby was bought and sold, or that he was made subject to the despotism of man. But though he thus acknowledged the justice due to a whole continent on the one side, he confessed there were opposing claims of justice on the other. The case of the West Indians deserved a tender consideration also.

He doubted, if we were to relinquish the Slave Trade alone, whether it might not be carried on still more barbarously than at present; and whether, if we were to stop it altogether, the islands could keep up their present stocks. It had been asserted that they could. But he thought that the stopping of the importations could not be depended upon for this purpose, so much as a plan for providing them with more females.

With the mode suggested by his right honourable friend, Mr. Dundas, he was pleased, though he did not wholly agree to it. He could not grant liberty to the children born in the islands. He thought, also, that the trade ought to be permitted for ten or twelve years longer, under such arrangements as should introduce a kind of management among the slaves there, favourable to their interests, and of course to their future happiness. One species of regulation which he should propose, would be greater encouragement to the importation of females than of males, by means of a bounty on the former till their numbers should be found equal,

Rewards also might be given to those slaves who should raise a certain number of children; and to those who should devise means of lightening negro-labour. If the plan of his honourable friend should comprehend these regulations, he would heartily concur in it. He wished to see the Slave Trade abolished. Indeed, it did not deserve the name of a trade. It was not a trade, and ought not to be allowed. He was satisfied, that in a few years it would cease to be the reproach of this nation and the torment of Africa. But under regulations like these, it would cease without any material injury to the interests of others.

Mr. Fox said, that after what had fallen from the two last speakers, he could remain no longer silent. Something so mischievous had come out, and something so like a foundation had been laid for preserving, not only for years to come, but for ever, this detestable traffic, that he should feel himself wanting in his duty, if he were not to deprecate all such deceptions and delusions upon the country.

The honourable gentlemen had called themselves moderate men: but upon this subject he neither felt, nor desired to feel, anything like a sentiment of moderation. Their speeches had reminded him of a passage in MIDDLETON'S *Life of Cicero*. The translation of it was defective, though it would equally suit his purpose. He says, "To enter into a man's house, and kill him, his wife, and family, in the night, is certainly a most heinous crime, and deserving of death; but to break open his house, to murder him, his wife, and all his children in the night, may be still very right, provided it be done with moderation." Now, was there anything more absurd in this passage, than to say, that the Slave Trade might be carried on with moderation; for, if you could not rob or murder a single man with moderation, with what moderation could you pillage and wound a whole nation? In fact, the question of the abolition was simply a question of justice. It was only, whether we should authorize by law, respecting Africa, the commission of crimes, for which, in this country, we should forfeit our lives: notwithstanding which, it was to be treated, in the opinion of these honourable gentlemen, with moderation.

Mr. Addington had proposed to cure the disproportion of the sexes in the islands, by a bounty on the importation of females; or, in other words, by offering a premium to any crew of ruffians, who would tear them from their native country. He would let loose a banditti against the most weak and defenceless of the sex. He would occasion these to kill fathers, husbands, and brothers, to get possession of their relatives, the females, who, after this carnage, were to be reserved for—slavery. He should like to see the man, who would pen such a moderate clause for a British parliament.

Mr. Dundas had proposed to abolish the Slave Trade, by bettering the state of the slaves in the islands, and particularly that of their offspring. His plan, with respect to the latter, was not a little curious. They were to become free, when born; and then they were to be educated, at the expense of those to whom their fathers belonged. But it was clear, that they could not be educated for nothing. In order, therefore, to repay this expense, they were to be slaves for ten or fifteen years. In short, they were to have an education, which was to qualify them to become freemen; and, after they had been so educated, they were to become slaves. But as this free education might possibly unfit them for submitting to slavery; so, after they had been made to bow under the yoke for ten or fifteen years, they might then, perhaps, be equally unfit to become free; and therefore, might be retained as slaves for a few years longer, if not for their whole lives. He never heard of a scheme so moderate, and yet so absurd and visionary.

The same honourable gentleman had observed, that the conduct of other nations should not hinder us from doing our duty; but yet neutrals would furnish our islands with slaves. What was the inference from this moderate assertion, but that we might as well supply them ourselves? He hoped, if we were yet to be supplied, it would never be by Englishmen. We ought no longer to be concerned in such a crime.

An adversary, Mr. Baillie, had said, that it would not be fair to take the character of this country from the records of the Old Bailey. He did not at all wonder, when the subject of the Slave

Trade was mentioned, that the Old Bailey naturally occurred to his recollection. The facts, which had been described in the evidence, were associated in all our minds with the ideas of criminal justice. But Mr. Baillie had forgot the essential difference between the two cases. When we learnt from these records, that crimes were committed in this country, we learnt also, that they were punished with transportation and death. But the crimes committed in the Slave Trade were passed over with impunity. Nay, the perpetrators were even sent out again to commit others.

As to the mode of obtaining slaves, it had been suggested as the least disreputable, that they became so in consequence of condemnation as criminals. But he would judge of the probability of this mode by the reasonableness of it. No less than eighty thousand Africans were exported annually by the different nations of Europe from their own country. Was it possible to believe that this number could have been legally convicted of crimes, for which they had justly forfeited their liberty? The supposition was ridiculous. The truth was, that every enormity was practised to obtain the persons of these unhappy people. He referred those present to the case in the evidence of the African trader, who had kidnapped and sold a girl, and who was afterwards kidnapped and sold himself. He desired them to reason upon the conversation which had taken place between the trader and the captain of the ship on this occasion. He desired them also to reason upon the instance mentioned this evening, which had happened in the river Cameroons, and they would infer all the rapine, all the desolation, and all the bloodshed, which had been placed to the account of this execrable trade.

An attempt had been made to impress the House with the horrible scenes which had taken place in St. Domingo, as an argument against the abolition of the Slave Trade; but could any more weighty argument be produced in its favour? What were the causes of the insurrections there? They were two. The first was the indecision of the National Assembly, who wished to compromise between that which was right and that which was wrong on this subject. And the second was the oppression of the people of colour, and of the slaves. In the first of the causes we

saw something like the moderation of Mr. Dundas and Mr. Addington. One day this Assembly talked of liberty, and favoured the Blacks. Another day they suspended their measures and favoured the Whites. They wished to steer a middle course; but decision had been mercy. Decision even against the planters would have been a thousand times better than indecision and half measures. In the mean time, the people of colour took the great work of justice into their own hands. Unable, however, to complete this of themselves, they called in the aid of the slaves. Here began the second cause; for the slaves, feeling their own power, began to retaliate on the Whites. And here it may be observed, that, in all revolutions, the clemency or cruelty of the victors will always be in proportion to their former privileges, or their oppression. That the slaves then should have been guilty of great excesses, was not to be wondered at; for where did they learn their cruelty? They learnt it from those who had tyrannized over them. The oppression, which they themselves had suffered, was fresh in their memories, and this had driven them to exercise their vengeance so furiously. If we wished to prevent similar scenes in our own islands, we must reject all moderate measures, and at once abolish the Slave Trade. By doing this, we should procure a better treatment for the slaves there; and when this happy change of system should have taken place, we might depend on them for the defence of the islands as much as on the whites themselves.

Upon the whole, he would give his opinion of this traffic in a few words. He believed it to be impolitic—he knew it to be inhuman—he was certain it was unjust—he thought it so inhuman and unjust, that, if the colonies could not be cultivated without it, they ought not to be cultivated at all. It would be much better for us to be without them, than not abolish the Slave Trade. He hoped therefore that members would this night act the part which would do them honour. He declared, that, whether he should vote in a large minority or a small one, he would never give up the cause. Whether in Parliament or out of it, in whatever situation he might ever be, as long as he had a voice to speak, this question should never be

at rest. Believing the trade to be of the nature of crimes and pollutions, which stained the honour of the country, he would never relax his efforts. It was his duty to prevent man from preying upon man; and if he and his friends should die before they had attained their glorious object, he hoped there would never be wanting men alive to their duty, who would continue to labour till the evil should be wholly done away. If the situation of the Africans was as happy as servitude could make them, he could not consent to the enormous crime of selling man to man; nor permit a practice to continue, which put an entire bar to the civilization of one quarter of the globe. He was sure that the nation would not much longer allow the continuance of enormities which shocked human nature. The West Indians had no right to demand that crimes should be permitted by this country for their advantage; and, if they were wise, they would lend their cordial assistance to such measures, as would bring about, in the shortest possible time, the abolition of this execrable trade.

Mr. Dundas rose again, but it was only to move an amendment, namely, that the word "gradually" should be inserted before the words "to be abolished" in Mr. Wilberforce's motion.

Mr. Jenkinson (afterwards Earl of Liverpool) said, that the opinions of those who were averse to the abolition had been unfairly stated. They had been described as founded on policy, in opposition to humanity. If it could be made out that humanity would be aided by the abolition, he would be the last person to oppose it. The question was not, he apprehended, whether the trade was founded in injustice and oppression: he admitted it was. Nor was it, whether it was in itself abstractedly an evil: he admitted this also; but whether, under all the circumstances of the case, any considerable advantage would arise to a number of our fellow-creatures from the abolition of the trade in the manner in which it had been proposed.

He was ready to admit, that the Africans at home were made miserable by the Slave Trade, and that, if it were universally abolished, great benefit would arise to them. No one, however,

would assert, that these miseries arose from the trade as carried on by Great Britain only. Other countries occasioned as much of the evil as we did; and if the abolition of it by us should prove only the transferring of it to those countries, very little benefit would result from the measure.

What then was the probability of our example being followed by foreign powers? Five years had now elapsed since the question was first started, and what had any of them done? The Portuguese continued the trade. The Spaniards still gave a bounty to encourage it. He believed there were agents from Holland in this country, who were then negotiating with persons concerned in it in order to secure its continuance. The abolition also had been proposed in the National Assembly of France, and had been rejected there. From these circumstances he had a right to infer, that if we gave up the trade, we should only transfer it to those countries: but this transfer would be entirely against the Africans. The mortality on board English ships, previously to the regulating bill, was four and an-eighth per cent. Since that time it had been reduced to little more than three per cent*. In French ships it was near ten, and in Dutch ships from five to seven, per cent. In Portuguese it was less than either in French or Dutch, but more than in English ships since the regulating bill. Thus the deaths of the Africans would be more than doubled, if we were to abolish the trade.

Perhaps it might be replied, that the importations being stopped in our own islands, fewer Africans would experience this misery, because fewer would be taken from their own country on this account. But he had a right to infer, that as the planters purchased slaves at present, they would still think it their interest to have them. The question then was, whether they could get them by smuggling. Now it appeared by the evidence, that many hundred slaves had been stolen from time to time from Jamaica, and carried into Cuba. But if persons could smuggle slaves out of our colonies, they could smuggle slaves into them;

* Mr. Wilberforce stated it on the same evening to be between ten and eleven per cent. for the last year. The number then exported from Africa to our islands was rather more than 22,000, of whom more than 2,300 died.

but particularly when the planters might think it to their interest to assist them.

With respect to the slaves there, instances had been related of their oppression, which shocked the feelings of all who heard them: but was it fair to infer from these their general ill usage? Suppose a person were to make a collection of the different abuses, which had happened for a series of years under our own happy constitution, and use these as an argument of its worthlessness; should we not say to him, that in the most perfect system which the human intellect could form, some defects would exist; and that it was unfair to draw inferences from such partial facts? In the same manner he would argue relative to the alleged treatment of the slaves. Evidence had been produced upon this point on both sides. He should not be afraid to oppose the authorities of Lord Rodney, and others, against any, however respectable, in favour of the abolition. But this was not necessary. There was another species of facts, which would answer the same end. Previously to the year 1730 the decrease of the slaves in our islands was very considerable. From 1730 to 1755 the deaths were reduced to only two and a-half per cent. above the births; from 1755 to 1768 to only one and three-fourths; and from 1768 to 1788 to only one per cent. This then, on the first view of the subject, would show, that whatever might have been the situation of slaves formerly, it had been gradually improved. But if, in addition to this, we considered the peculiar disadvanges under which they laboured; the small proportion of females to males; and the hurricanes, and famines, which had swept away thousands, we should find it physically impossible, that they could have increased as related, if they had been treated as cruelly as the friends of the abolition had described.

This species of facts would enable him also to draw still more important conclusions; namely, that as the slaves in the West Indies had gradually increased, they would continue to increase; that very few years would pass, not only before the births were equal to the deaths, but before they were more numerous than the deaths; and that if this was likely to happen in the present state

of things, how much more would it happen, if by certain regulations the increase of the slaves should be encouraged?

The only question then was, whether it was more advantageous to breed or to import. He thought he should prove the former; and if so, then this increase was inevitable, and the importations would necessarily cease.

In the first place, the gradual increase of the slaves of late years clearly proved, that such increase had been encouraged. But their price had been doubled in the last twenty years. The planter, therefore, must feel it his interest to desist from purchasing, if possible. But again, the greatest mortality was among the newly imported slaves. The diseases they contracted on the passage, and their deaths in the seasoning, all made for the same doctrine. Add to this, that slaves bred in the islands were more expert at colonial labour, more reconciled to their situation, and better disposed towards their masters than those who were brought from Africa.

But it had been said, that the births and deaths in the islands were now equal; and that therefore no further supply was wanted. He denied the propriety of this inference. The slaves were subject to peculiar diseases. They were exposed also to hurricanes and consequent famines. That the day, however, would come, when the stock there would be sufficient, no person who attended to the former part of his argument could doubt. That they had gradually increased, were gradually increasing, and would, by certain regulations, increase more and more, must be equally obvious. But these were all considerations for continuing the traffic a little longer.

He then desired the House to reflect upon the state of St. Domingo. Had not its calamities been imputed by its own deputies to the advocates for the abolition? Were ever any scenes of horror equal to those which had passed there? And should we, when principles of the same sort were lurking in our own islands, expose our fellow-subjects to the same miseries, who, if guilty of promoting this trade, had, at least, been encouraged in it by ourselves?

That the Slave Trade was an evil, he admitted. That the

state of slavery itself was likewise an evil, he admitted; and if the question was, not whether we should abolish, but whether we should establish these, he would be the first to oppose himself to their existence; but there were many evils, which we should have thought it our duty to prevent, yet which, when they had once arisen, it was more dangerous to oppose than to submit to. The duty of a statesman was, not to consider abstractedly what was right or wrong, but to weigh the consequences which were likely to result from the abolition of an evil, against those which were likely to result from its continuance. Agreeing then most perfectly with the abolitionists in their end, he differed from them only in the means of accomplishing it. He was desirous of doing that gradually, which he conceived they were doing rashly. He had therefore drawn up two propositions. The first was, That an address be presented to His Majesty, that he would recommend to the colonial assemblies to grant premiums to such planters, and overseers, as should distinguish themselves by promoting the annual increase of the slaves by birth; and likewise freedom to every female slave, who had reared five children to the age of seven years. The second was, That a bounty of five pounds per head be given to the master of every slave-ship, who should import in any cargo a greater number of females than males, not exceeding the age of twenty-five years. To bring forward these propositions, he would now move that the chairman leave the chair.

Mr. Este wished the debate to be adjourned. He allowed there were many enormities in the trade, which called for regulation. There were two propositions before the House: the one for the immediate, and the other for the gradual, abolition of the trade. He thought that members should be allowed time to compare their respective merits. At present his own opinion was, that gradual abolition would answer the end proposed in the least exceptionable manner.

Mr. Pitt rejoiced that the debate had taken a turn, which contracted the question into such narrow limits. The matter then in dispute was merely as to the time at which the abolition should take place. He therefore congratulated the House, the

country, and the world, that this great point had been gained; that we might now consider this trade as having received its condemnation; that this curse of mankind was seen in its true light; and that the greatest stigma on our national character, which ever yet existed, was about to be removed! Mankind, he trusted, were now likely to be delivered from the greatest practical evil that ever afflicted the human race—from the most severe and extensive calamity recorded in the history of the world.

His honourable friend (Mr. Jenkinson) had insinuated, that any act for the abolition would be evaded. But if we were to enforce this act with all the powers of the country, how could it fail to be effectual? But his honourable friend had himself satisfied him upon this point. He had acknowledged, that the trade would drop of itself, on account of the increasing dearness of the commodity imported. He would ask then, if we were to leave to the importer no means of importation but by smuggling; and if, besides all the present disadvantages, we were to load him with all the charges and hazards of the smuggler, would there be any danger of any considerable supply of fresh slaves being poured into the islands through this channel? The question under these circumstances, he pronounced, would not bear a dispute.

His honourable friend had also maintained, that it would be inexpedient to stop the importations immediately, because the deaths and births in the islands were as yet not equal. But he (Mr. Pitt) had proved last year, from the most authentic documents, that an increase of the births above the deaths had already taken place. This then was the time for beginning the abolition. But he would now observe, that five years had elapsed since these documents were framed; and therefore the presumption was, that the black population was increasing at an extraordinary rate. He had not, to be sure, in his consideration of the subject, entered into the dreadful mortality arising from the clearing of new lands. Importations for this purpose were to be considered, not as carrying on the trade, but as setting on foot a Slave Trade, a measure which he believed no one present would then support. He therefore asked his honourable friend, whether the period he

had looked to was now arrived? whether the West Indies, at this hour, were not in a state in which they could maintain their population?

It had been argued, that one or other of these two assertions was false; that either the population of the slaves must be decreasing, (which the abolitionists denied,) or, if it was increasing, the slaves must have been well treated. That their population was rather increasing than otherwise, and also that their general treatment was by no means so good as it ought to have been, were both points which had been proved by different witnesses. Neither were they incompatible with each other. But he would see whether the explanation of this seeming contradiction would not refute the argument of expediency, as advanced by his honourable friend. Did the slaves decrease in numbers?—Yes. Then ill usage must have been the cause of it; but if so, the abolition was immediately necessary to restrain it. Did they, on the other hand, increase?—Yes. But if so, no further importations were wanted. Was their population (to take a middle course) nearly stationary, and their treatment neither so good nor so bad as it might be?—Yes. But if so, this was the proper period for stopping further supplies; for both the population and the treatment would be improved by such a measure.

But he would show again the futility of the argument of his honourable friend. He himself had admitted, that it was in the power of the colonists to correct the various abuses, by which the Negro population was restrained. But they could not do this without improving the condition of their slaves; without making them approximate towards the rank of citizens; without giving them some little interest in their labour, which would occasion them to work with the energy of men. But now the Assembly of Grenada had themselves stated, "that though the Negroes were allowed the afternoons of only one day in every week, they would do as much work in that afternoon, when employed for their own benefit, as in the whole day, when employed in their masters' service." Now, after this confession, the House might burn all his calculations relative to the Negro population; for, if

it had not yet quite reached the desirable state which he had pointed out, this confession had proved, that further supplies were not wanted. A Negro, if he worked for himself, could do double work. By an improvement then in the mode of labour, the work in the islands could be doubled. But if so, what would become of the argument of his honourable friend? for then only half the number of the present labourers were necessary.

He would now try this argument of expediency by other considerations. The best informed writers on the subject had told us, that the purchase of new Negroes was injurious to the planters. But if this statement was just, would not the abolition be beneficial to them? That it would, was the opinion of Mr. Long, their own historian. "If the Slave Trade," says he, "was prohibited for four or five years, it would enable them to retrieve their affairs by preventing them from running into debt, either by renting or purchasing Negroes." To this acknowledgment he would add a fact from the evidence, which was, that a North American province, by such a prohibition alone for a few years, from being deeply plunged in debt, had become independent, rich, and flourishing.

The next consideration was the danger, to which the islands were exposed from the newly imported slaves. Mr. Long, with a view of preventing insurrections, had advised, that a duty, equal to a prohibition, might be laid on the importation of Coromantine slaves. After noticing one insurrection, which happened through their means, he speaks of another in the following year, in which thirty-three Coromantines, "most of whom had been newly imported, murdered and wounded no less than nineteen Whites in the space of an hour." To the authority of Mr. Long he would add the recorded opinion of a committee of the House of Assembly of Jamaica, which was appointed to inquire into the best means of preventing future insurrections. The committee reported, that "the rebellion had originated, like most others, with the Coromantines," and they proposed that a bill should be brought in for laying a higher duty on the importation of these particular Negroes, which should operate as a prohibition. But the danger was not confined to the introduction of

Coromantines. Mr. Long accounts for the frequent insurrections in Jamaica from the greatness of its general importations. "In two years and a-half," says he, "twenty-seven thousand Negroes have been imported.—No wonder that we have rebellions!" Surely then, when his honourable friend spoke of the calamities of St. Domingo, and of similar dangers impending over our own islands, it ill became him to be the person to cry out for further importations! It ill became him to charge upon the abolitionists the crime of stirring up insurrections, who only recommended what the legislature of Jamaica itself had laid down in a time of danger with an avowed view to prevent them. It was, indeed, a great satisfaction to himself, that among the many arguments for prohibiting the Slave Trade, the security of our West Indian possessions against internal commotions, as well as foreign enemies, was among the most prominent and forcible. And here he would ask his honourable friend, whether in this part of the argument he did not see reason for immediate abolition. Why should we any longer persist in introducing those latent principles of conflagration, which, if they should once burst forth, might annihilate the industry of a hundred years? which might throw the planters back a whole century in their profits, in their cultivation, and in their progress towards the emancipation of their slaves? It was our duty to vote that the abolition of the Slave Trade should be immediate, and not to leave it to he knew not what future time or contingency.

Having now done with the argument of expediency, he would consider the proposition of his right honourable friend Mr. Dundas; that, on account of some patrimonial rights of the West Indians, the prohibition of the Slave Trade would be an invasion of their legal inheritance. He would first observe, that, if this argument was worth anything, it applied just as much to gradual as to immediate abolition. He had no doubt, that, at whatever period we should say the trade should cease, it would be equally set up; for it would certainly be just as good an argument against the measure in seventy years hence, as it was against it now. It implied also, that Parliament had no right to stop the importations: but had this detestable traffic received

such a sanction, as placed it more out of the jurisdiction of the legislature for ever after, than any other branch of our trade? In what a situation did the proposition of his honourable friend place the legislature of Great Britain! It was scarcely possible to lay a duty on any one article, which might not in some way affect the property of individuals. But if the laws respecting the Slave Trade implied a contract for its perpetual continuance, the House could never regulate any other of the branches of our national commerce.

But any contract for the promotion of this trade must, in his opinion, have been void from the beginning: for if it was an outrage upon justice, and only another name for fraud, robbery, and murder, what pledge could devolve upon the legislature to incur the obligation of becoming principals in the commission of such enormities by sanctioning their continuance?

But he would appeal to the acts themselves. That of 23 George II. c. 31, was the one upon which the greatest stress was laid. How would the House be surprised to hear that the very outrages committed in the prosecution of this trade had been forbidden by that act! "No master of a ship trading to Africa," says the act, "shall by fraud, force, or violence, or by any indirect practice whatever, take on board or carry away from that coast any Negro, or native of that country, or commit any violence on the natives, to the prejudice of the said trade; and every person so offending, shall for every such offence forfeit one hundred pounds." But the whole trade had been demonstrated to be a system of fraud, force, and violence; and therefore the contract was daily violated, under which the Parliament allowed it to continue.

But why had the trade ever been permitted at all? The preamble of the act would show: "Whereas the trade to and from Africa is very advantageous to Great Britain, and necessary for supplying the Plantations and Colonies thereunto belonging with a sufficient number of Negroes at reasonable rates, and for that purpose the said trade should be carried on."—Here then we might see what the Parliament had in view, when it passed this act. But no one of the occasions, on which it grounded its pro-

ceedings, now existed. He would plead, then, the act itself as an argument for the abolition. If it had been proved that, instead of being very advantageous to Great Britain, it was the most destructive to her interests—that it was the ruin of her seamen—that it stopped the extension of her manufactures;—if it had been proved, in the second place, that it was not now necessary for the supply of our Plantations with Negroes;—if it had been further established, that it was from the beginning contrary to the first principles of justice, and consequently that a pledge for its continuance, had one been attempted to be given, must have been absolutely void—where in this act of parliament was the contract to be found, by which Britain was bound, as she was said to be, never to listen to her own true interests and to the cries of the natives of Africa? Was it not clear, that all argument, founded on the supposed pledge of Parliament, made against those who employed it?

But if we were not bound by existing laws to the support of this trade, we were doubly criminal in pursuing it; for why ought it to be abolished at all? Because it was incurable injustice. Africa was the ground on which he chiefly rested; and there it was, that his two honourable friends, one of whom had proposed gradual abolition, and the other regulation, did not carry their principles to their full extent. Both had confessed the trade to be a moral evil. How much stronger, then, was the argument for immediate than for gradual abolition! If on the ground of a moral evil it was to be abolished at last, why ought it not now? Why was injustice to be suffered to remain for a single hour? He knew of no evil, which ever had existed, nor could he imagine any to exist, worse than the tearing of eighty thousand persons annually from their native land, by a combination of the most civilized nations, in the most enlightened quarter of the globe; but more especially by that nation, which called herself the most free and the most happy of them all.

He would now notice the objection, that other nations would not give up the Slave Trade, if we were to renounce it. But if the trade were stained but by a thousandth part of the criminality which he and others, after a thorough investigation of the sub-

ject, charged upon it, the House ought immediately to vote for its abolition. This miserable argument, if persevered in, would be an eternal bar to the annihilation of the evil. How was it ever to be eradicated, if every nation was thus prudentially to wait till the concurrence of all the world should be obtained? But it applied a thousand times more strongly in a contrary way. How much more justly would other nations say, "Great Britain, free as she is, just and honourable as she is, not only has not abolished, but has refused to abolish, the Slave Trade. She has investigated it well. Her senate has deliberated upon it. It is plain, then, that she sees no guilt in it." With this argument we should furnish the other nations of Europe, if we were again to refuse to put an end to this cruel traffic; and we should have from henceforth not only to answer for our own, but for their crimes also. Already we had suffered one year to pass away; and now, when the question was renewed, not only had this wretched argument been revived, but a proposition had been made for the gradual abolition of the trade. He knew, indeed, the difficulty of reforming long established abuses; but in the present case, by proposing some other period than the present, by prescribing some condition, by waiting for some contingencies, perhaps till we obtained the general concurrence of Europe, (a concurrence which he believe never yet took place at the commencement of any one improvement in policy or morals,) he feared that this most enormous evil would never be redressed. Was it not folly to wait for the stream to run down before we crossed the bed of its channel? Alas! we might wait for ever. The river would still flow on. We should be no nearer the object which we had in view, so long as the step, which could alone bring us to it, was not taken.

He would now proceed to the civilization of Africa; and, as his eye had just glanced upon a West Indian law in the evidence upon the table, he would begin with an argument, which the sight of it had suggested to him. This argument had been ably answered in the course of the evening; but he would view it in yet another light. It had been said, that the savage disposition of the Africans rendered the prospect of their civilization almost

hopeless. This argument was indeed of long standing; but, last year, it had been supported upon a new ground. Captain Frazer had stated in his evidence, that a boy had been put to death at Cabenda, because there were those who refused to purchase him as a slave. This single story was deemed by him, and had been considered by others, as a sufficient proof of the barbarity of the Africans, and of the inutility of abolishing the Slave Trade. But they, who had used this fact, had suppressed several circumstances relating to it. It appeared, on questioning Captain Frazer afterward, that this boy had previously run away from his master three several times; that the master had to pay his value, according to the custom of the country, every time he was brought back; and that partly from anger at the boy for running away so frequently, and partly to prevent a repetition of the same expense, he determined to destroy him. Such was the explanation of the signal instance, which was to fix barbarity on all Africa, as it came out in the cross-examination of Captain Frazer. That this African master was unenlightened and barbarous, he freely admitted; but what would an enlightened and civilized West Indian have done in a similar case? He would quote the law, passed in the West Indies in 1722, which he had just cast his eye upon in the book of evidence, by which law this very same crime of running away was by the legislature of an island, by the grave and deliberate sentence of an enlightened legislature, punished with death; and this, not in the case only of the third offence, but even in the very first instance. It was enacted, "That, if any Negro or other slave should withdraw himself from his master for the term of six months, or any slave, who was absent, should not return within that time, every such person should suffer death." There was also another West Indian law, by which every Negro was armed against his fellow Negro, for he was authorized to kill every runaway slave; and he had even a reward held out to him for so doing. Let the House now contrast the two cases. Let them ask themselves which of the two exhibited the greater barbarity; and whether they could possibly vote for the continuance of the Slave Trade, upon the principle that the Africans had shown themselves to be a race of incorrigible barbarians?

Something like an opposite argument, but with a like view, had been maintained by others on this subject. It had been said, in justification of the trade, that the Africans had derived some little civilization from their intercourse with us. Yes; we had given them just enough of the forms of justice to enable them to add the pretext of legal trials to their other modes of perpetrating the most atrocious crimes. We had given them just enough of European improvements, to enable them the more effectually to turn Africa into a ravaged wilderness. Alas! alas! we had carried on a trade with them from this civilized and enlightened country, which, instead of diffusing knowledge, had been a check to every laudable pursuit. We had carried a poison into their country, which spread its contagious effects from one end of it to the other, and which penetrated to its very centre, corrupting every part to which it reached. We had there subverted the whole order of nature; we had aggravated every natural barbarity, and furnished to every man motives for committing, under the name of trade, acts of perpetual hostility and perfidy against his neighbour. Thus had the perversion of British commerce carried misery instead of happiness to one whole quarter of the globe. False to the very principles of trade, misguided in our policy, unmindful of our duty, what almost irreparable mischief had we done to that continent! How should we hope to obtain forgiveness from heaven, if we refused to use those means which the mercy of Providence had still reserved to us for wiping away the guilt and shame, with which we were now covered? If we refused even this degree of compensation, how aggravated would be our guilt! Should we delay, then, to repair these incalculable injuries? We ought to count the days, nay the very hours, which intervened to delay the accomplishment of such a work.

On this great subject, the civilization of Africa, which, he confessed, was near his heart, he would yet add a few observations. And first he would say, that the present deplorable state of that country, especially when we reflected that her chief calamities were to be ascribed to us, called for our generous aid, rather than justified any despair, on our part, of her recovery, and still less a repetition of our injuries. On what ground of theory or history

did we act, when we supposed she was never to be reclaimed? There was a time, which it might be now fit to call to remembrance, when human sacrifices, and even this very practice of the Slave Trade existed in our own island. Slaves, as we may read in HENRY'S *History of Great Britain*, were formerly an established article of our exports. "Great numbers," he says, "were exported like cattle from the British coast, and were to be seen exposed for sale in the Roman markets."—"Adultery, witchcraft, and debt," says the same historian, "were probably some of the chief sources of supplying the Roman market with British slaves—prisoners taken in war were added to the number—there might be also among them some unfortunate gamesters, who, after having lost all their goods, at length staked themselves, their wives, and their children." Now every one of these sources of slavery had been stated to be at this hour a source of slavery in Africa. If these practices, therefore, were to be admitted as proofs of the natural incapacity of its inhabitants, why might they not have been applied to ancient Britain? Why might not then some Roman senator, pointing to British barbarians, have predicted with equal boldness, that these were a people who were destined never to be free; who were without the understanding necessary for the attainment of useful arts; depressed by the hand of nature below the level of the human species, and created to form a supply of slaves for the rest of the world? But, happily, since that time, notwithstanding what would then have been the justness of these predictions, we had emerged from barbarism. We were now raised to a situation which exhibited a striking contrast to every circumstance by which a Roman might have characterized us, and by which we now characterized Africa. There was indeed one thing wanting to complete the contrast, and to clear us altogether from the imputation of acting even to this hour as barbarians; for we continued to this hour a barbarous traffic in slaves; we continued it even yet, in spite of all our great pretensions. We were once as obscure among the nations of the earth, as savage in our manners, as debased in our morals, as degraded in our understandings, as these unhappy Africans. But in the lapse of a long series of years, by a progression slow, and for a time almost

imperceptible, we had become rich in a variety of acquirements. We were favoured above measure in the gifts of Providence, we were unrivalled in commerce, pre-eminent in arts, foremost in the pursuits of philosophy and science, and established in all the blessings of civil society; we were in the possession of peace, of liberty, and of happiness; we were under the guidance of a mild and a beneficent religion; and we were protected by impartial laws and the purest administration of justice; we were living under a system of government, which our own happy experience led us to pronounce the best and wisest, and which had become the admiration of the world. From all these blessings we must for ever have been excluded, had there been any truth in those principles, which some had not hesitated to lay down as applicable to the case of Africa; and we should have been at this moment little superior, either in morals, knowledge, or refinement, to the rude inhabitants of that continent.

If then we felt that this perpetual confinement in the fetters of brutal ignorance would have been the greatest calamity which could have befallen us; if we viewed with gratitude the contrast between our present and our former situation; if we shuddered to think of the misery which would still have overwhelmed us, had our country continued to the present times, through some cruel policy, to be the mart for slaves to the more civilized nations of the world;—God forbid that we should any longer subject Africa to the same dreadful scourge, and exclude the sight of knowledge from her coasts, which had reached every other quarter of the globe!

He trusted we should no longer continue this commerce, and that we should no longer consider ourselves as conferring too great a boon on the natives of Africa in restoring them to the rank of human beings. He trusted we should not think ourselves too liberal, if, by abolishing the Slave Trade, we gave them the same common chance of civilization with other parts of the world. If we listened to the voice of reason and duty this night, some of us might live to see a reverse of that picture, from which we now turned our eyes with shame. We might live to behold the natives engaged in the calm occupations of industry, and in the pursuit of

a just commerce. We might behold the beams of science and philosophy breaking in upon their land, which at some happy period in still later times might blaze with full lustre; and joining their influence to that of pure religion, might illuminate and invigorate the most distant extremities of that immense continent. Then might we hope, that even Africa (though last of all the quarters of the globe) should enjoy at length, in the evening of her days, those blessings, which had descended so plentifully upon us in a much earlier period of the world. Then also would Europe, participating in her improvement and prosperity, receive an ample recompense for the tardy kindness (if kindness it could be called) of no longer hindering her from extricating herself out of the darkness, which, in other more fortunate regions, had been so much more speedily dispelled.

> ———Nos primus equis Oriens afflavit anhelis;
> Illic sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper.

Then might be applied to Africa those words, originally used indeed with a different view:

> His demùm exactis ——— ———
> Devenere locos lætos, et amœna vireta
> Fortunatorum nemorum, sedesque beatas;
> Largior hìc campos æther et lumine vestit
> Purpureo.

It was in this view—it was as an atonement for our long and cruel injustice towards Africa, that the measure proposed by his honourable friend Mr. Wilberforce most forcibly recommended itself to his mind. The great and happy change to be expected in the state of her inhabitants was, of all the various benefits of the abolition, in his estimation the most extensive and important. He should vote against the adjournment; and he should also oppose every proposition which tended either to prevent, or even to postpone for an hour, the total abolition of the Slave Trade.

Mr. Pitt having concluded his speech (at about six in the morning), Sir William Dolben, the chairman, proposed the following questions:—The first was on the motion of Mr. Jenkinson, "that the chairman do now leave the chair." This was lost by a majority of two hundred and thirty-four to eighty-seven. The second was on the motion of Mr. Dundas, "that the

abolition should be gradual;" when the votes for gradual exceeded those for immediate by one hundred and ninety-three to one hundred and twenty-five. He then put the amended question, that "it was the opinion of the committee, that the trade ought to be gradually abolished." The committee having divided again, the votes for a gradual abolition were two hundred and thirty, and those against any abolition were eighty-five.

After this debate, the committee for the abolition of the Slave Trade held a meeting. They voted their thanks to Mr. Wilberforce for his motion, and to Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and those other members of the House who had supported it. They resolved, also, that the House of Commons, having determined that the Slave Trade ought to be gradually abolished, had by that decision manifested their opinion, that it was cruel and unjust. They resolved, also, that a gradual abolition of it was not an adequate remedy for its injustice and cruelty; neither could it be deemed a compliance with the general wishes of the people, as expressed in their numerous and urgent petitions to Parliament; and they resolved lastly, that the interval in which the Slave Trade should be permitted to continue, afforded a prospect of redoubled cruelties and ravages on the coast of Africa; and that it imposed therefore an additional obligation on every friend to the cause to use all constitutional means to obtain its immediate abolition.

At a subsequent meeting they voted their thanks to the right honourable Lord Muncaster, for the able support he had given to the great object of their institution by his *Historical Sketches of the Slave Trade, and of its Effects in Africa;* addressed to the people of Great Britain; and they elected the Rev. Richard Gifford, and the Rev. Thomas Gisborne, honorary and corresponding members; the first on account of his excellent sermon before-mentioned, and other services; and the latter on account of his truly Christian and seasonable pamphlet, entitled *Remarks on the late Decision of the House of Commons, respecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade.*

On the 23rd of April, the House of Commons resolved itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider the subject again; and Mr. Beaufoy was put into the chair.

Mr. Dundas, upon whom the task of introducing a bill for the gradual abolition of the Slave Trade now devolved, rose to offer the outlines of a plan for that purpose. He intended, he said, immediately to abolish that part of the trade, by which we supplied foreigners with slaves. The other part of it was to be continued seven years from the 1st of January next. He grounded the necessity of its continuance till this time upon the documents of the Negro population in the different islands. In many of these, slaves were imported, but they were re-exported nearly in equal numbers. Now, all these he considered to be in a state to go on without future supplies from Africa. Jamaica and the ceded islands retained almost all the slaves imported into them. This he considered as a proof that these had not attained the same desirable state; and it was therefore necessary, that the trade should be continued longer on this account. It was his intention, however, to provide proper punishments, while it lasted, for abuses both in Africa and in the Middle Passage. He would take care, as far as he could, that none but young slaves should be brought from the Coast of Africa. He would encourage establishments there for a new species of traffic. Foreign nations should be invited to concur in the abolition. He should propose a prædial rather than a personal service for the West Indies, and institutions, by which the slaves there should be instructed in religious duties. He concluded by reading several resolutions, which he would leave to the future consideration of the House.

Mr. Pitt then rose. He deprecated the resolutions altogether. He denied also the inferences which Mr. Dundas had drawn from the West Indian documents relative to the Negro population. He had looked over his own calculations from the same documents again and again, and he would submit them, with all their data, if it should be necessary, to the House.

Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Fox held the same language. They contended also, that Mr. Dundas had now proved, a thousand times more strongly than ever, the necessity of immediate abolition. All the resolutions he had read were operative against his own reasoning. The latter observed, that the Slave-traders were

in future only to be allowed to steal innocent children from their disconsolate parents.

After a few observations by Lord Sheffield, Mr. Drake, Colonel Tarleton, and Mr. Rolle, the House adjourned.

On the 25th of April it resumed the consideration of the subject. Mr. Dundas then went over his former resolutions, and concluded by moving, "that it should not be lawful to import any African Negroes into any British colonies, in ships owned or navigated by British subjects, at any time after the 1st of January, 1800."

Lord Mornington (now Marquis Wellesley) rose to propose an amendment. He congratulated his countrymen, that the Slave Trade had received its death-wound. This traffic was founded in injustice; and between right and wrong there could be no compromise. Africa was not to be sacrificed to the apparent good of the West Indies. He would not repeat those enormities out of the evidence, which had made such a deep impression upon the House. It had been resolved, that the trade should be abolished. The question then was, how long they were to persevere in the crime of its continuance? One had said, that they might be unjust for ten years longer; another, only till the beginning of the next century. But this diversity of opinion had proceeded from an erroneous statement of Mr. Dundas against the clear and irrefragable calculations of Mr. Pitt. The former had argued, that, because Jamaica and the ceded islands had retained almost all the slaves which had been imported into them, they were therefore not yet in a situation to support their population without further supplies from Africa. But the truth was, that the slaves, so retained, were kept, not to maintain the population there, but to clear new land. Now the House had determined, that the trade was not to be continued for this purpose. The population, therefore, in the islands was sufficient to continue the ordinary cultivation of them.

He deprecated the idea, that the Slave Trade had been so sanctioned by the acts of former Parliaments, that the present could make no alteration in it. Had not the House altered the import of foreign sugar into our islands? a measure, which at the

time affected the property of many. Had they not prohibited the exports of provisions from America to the same quarter; Again, as to compacts, had the Africans ever been parties to these? It was rather curious also, when King James the Second gave a charter to the slave-trader, that he should have given them a right to all the south of Africa, and authority over every person born therein! But, by doing this, it was clear that he gave them a right which he never possessed himself. After many other observations, he concluded by moving, "that the year 1793 be substituted in the place of the year 1800."

In the course of the debate, which followed, Mr. Burdon stated his conviction of the necessity of immediate abolition; but he would support the amendment, as the shortest of the terms proposed.

Mr. Robert Thornton would support it also, as the only choice left him. He dared not accede to a motion, by which we were to continue for seven years to imbrue our hands in innocent blood.

Mr. Ryder (now Earl of Harrowby) would not support the trade for one moment, if he could avoid it. He could not hold a balance with gold in one scale, and blood in the other.

Mr. William Smith exposed the wickedness of restricting the trade to certain ages. The original motion, he said, would only operate as a transfer of cruelty from the aged and the guilty to the young and the innocent. He entreated the House to consider, whether, if it related to their own children, any one of them would vote for it.

Mr. Windham had hitherto felt a reluctance to speaking, not from the abstruseness, but from the simplicity, of the subject; but he could not longer be silent, when he observed those arguments of policy creeping again out of their lurking-places, which had fled before eloquence and truth. The House had clearly given up the policy of the question. They had been determined by the justice of it. Why were they then to be troubled again with arguments of this nature? These, if admitted, would go to the subversion of all public as well as private morality. Nations were as much bound as individuals to a system of morals, though

a breach in the former could not be so easily punished. In private life morality took pretty good care of itself. It was a kind of retail article, in which the returns were speedy. If a man broke open his neighbour's house, he would feel the consequences. There was an ally of virtue, who rendered it the interest of individuals to be moral, and he was called the executioner. But as such punishment did not always await us in our national concerns, we should substitute honour as the guardian of our national conduct. He hoped the West Indians would consider the character of the mother-country, and the obligations to national as well as individual justice. He hoped, also, they would consider the sufferings, which they occasioned both in Africa, in the passage, and in the West Indies. In the passage, indeed, no one was capable of describing them. The section of the slave-ship, however, made up the deficiency of language, and did away all necessity of argument, on this subject. Disease there had to struggle with the new affliction of chains and punishment. At one view were the irksomeness of a goal, and the miseries of an hospital; so that the holds of these vessels put him in mind of the regions of the damned. The trade, he said, ought immediately to be abolished. On a comparison of the probable consequences of the abolition of it, he saw on one side only doubtful contingencies, but on the other shame and disgrace.

Sir James Johnstone contended for the immediate abolition of the trade. He had introduced the plough into his own plantation in the West Indies, and he found the land produced more sugar than when cultivated in the ordinary way by slaves. Even for the sake of the planters, he hoped the abolition would not be long delayed.

Mr. Dundas replied: after which a division took place. The number of votes in favour of the original motion were one hundred and fifty-eight, and for the amendment one hundred and nine.

On the 27th of April the House resumed the subject. Mr. Dundas moved, as before, that the Slave Trade should cease in the year 1800; upon which Lord Mornington moved, that the year 1795 should be substituted for the latter period.

In the course of the debate, which followed, Mr. Hubbard said, that he had voted against the abolition, when the year 1793 was proposed; but he thought that, if it were not to take place till 1795, sufficient time would be allowed the planters. He would support this amendment; and he congratulated the House on the prospect of the final triumph of truth, humanity, and justice.

Mr. Addington preferred the year 1796 to the year 1795.

Mr. Alderman Watson considered the abolition in 1796, to be as destructive as if it were immediate.

A division having taken place, the number of votes in favour of the original motion were one hundred and sixty-one, and in favour of Lord Mornington's amendment for the year 1795, one hundred and twenty-one. Sir Edward Knatchbull, however, seeing that there was a disposition in the House to bring the matter to a conclusion, and that a middle line would be preferred, moved that the year 1796 should be substituted for the year 1800. Upon this the House divided again; when there appeared for the original motion only one hundred and thirty-two, but for the amendment one hundred and fifty-one.

The gradual abolition having been now finally agreed upon for the year 1796, a committee was named, which carried the resolution to the Lords.

On the 8th of May, the Lords were summoned to consider it. Lord Stormont, after having spoken for some time, moved, that they should hear evidence upon it. Lord Grenville opposed the motion on account of the delay, which would arise from an examination of the witnesses by the House at large; but he moved that such witnesses should be examined by a committee of the House. Upon this a debate ensued, and afterwards a division; when the original motion was carried by sixty-three against thirty-six.

On the 15th of May, the Lords met again. Evidence was then ordered to be summoned in behalf of those interested in the continuance of the trade. At length it was introduced; but on the 5th of June, when only seven persons had been examined, a motion was made and carried, that the further examinations should be postponed to the next session.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Continuation from July 1792 to July 1793.—Author travels round the kingdom again.—Motion to renew the resolution of the last year in the Commons; motion lost.—New motion in the Commons to abolish the foreign Slave Trade; motion lost.—Proceedings of the Lords.

The resolution adopted by the Commons, that the trade should cease in 1796, was a matter of great joy to many; and several, in consequence of it, returned to the use of sugar. The committee, however, for the abolition did not view it in the same favourable light. They considered it as a political manœuvre to frustrate the accomplishment of the object. But the circumstance, which gave them the most concern, was the resolution of the Lords to hear evidence. It was impossible now to say, when the trade would cease. The witnesses in behalf of the merchants and planters, had obtained possession of the ground; and they might keep it, if they chose, even till the year 1800, to throw light upon a measure which was to be adopted in 1796. The committee found too, that they had again the laborious task before them of finding out new persons to give testimony in behalf of their cause; for some of their former witnesses were dead, and others were out of the kingdom; and unless they replaced these, there would be no probability of making out that strong case in the Lords, which they had established in the Commons. It devolved therefore upon me once more to travel for this purpose: but as I was then in too weak a state to bear as much fatigue as formerly, Dr. Dickson relieved me, by taking one part of the tour, namely, that to Scotland, upon himself.

These journeys we performed with considerable success; during which, the committee elected Mr. Joseph Townsend of Baltimore, in Maryland, an honorary and corresponding member.

Parliament having met, Mr. Wilberforce, in February 1793, moved, that the House resolve itself into a committee of the whole House on Thursday next, to consider of the circumstances of the Slave Trade. This motion was opposed by Sir William

Yonge, who moved, that this day six months should be substituted for Thursday next. A debate ensued: of this, however, as well as of several which followed, I shall give no account; as it would be tedious to the reader to hear a repetition of the same arguments. Suffice it to say, that the motion was lost by a majority of sixty-one to fifty-three.

This sudden refusal of the House of Commons to renew their own vote of the former year, gave great uneasiness to the friends of the cause. Mr. Wilberforce, however, resolved that the session should not pass without an attempt to promote it in another form; and accordingly, on the 14th of May, he moved for leave to bring in a bill to abolish that part of the Slave Trade, by which the British merchants supplied foreigners with slaves. This motion was opposed like the former; but was carried by a majority of seven. The bill was then brought in; and it passed its first and second reading with little opposition; but on the 5th of June, notwithstanding the eloquence of Mr. Pitt and of Mr. Fox, and the very able speeches of Mr. Francis, Mr. Courtenay, and others, it was lost by a majority of thirty-one to twenty-nine.

In the interval between these motions, the question experienced in the Lords considerable opposition. The Duke of Clarence moved that the House should not proceed in the consideration of the Slave Trade till after the Easter recess. The Earl of Abingdon was still more hostile afterwards. He deprecated the new philosophy. It was as full of mischief as the Box of Pandora. The doctrine of the abolition of the Slave Trade was a species of it; and he concluded by moving, that all further consideration of the subject be postponed. To the epithets, then bestowed upon the abolitionists by this nobleman, the Duke of Clarence added those of fanatics and hypocrites, among whom he included Mr. Wilberforce by name. All the other Lords, however, who were present, manifested such a dislike to the sentiments of the Earl of Abingdon, that he withdrew his motion.

After this, the hearing of evidence on the resolution of the House of Commons was resumed; and seven persons were examined before the close of the session.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Continuation from July 1793 to July 1794.—Author travels round the kingdom again.—Motion to abolish the foreign Slave Trade renewed in the Commons; and carried; but lost in the Lords; further proceedings there.—Author, on account of his declining health, obliged to retire from the cause.

THE committee for the abolition could not view the proceedings of both Houses of Parliament on this subject during the year 1793, without being alarmed for the fate of their question. The only two sources of hope, which they could discover, were in the disposition then manifested by the Peers, as to the conduct of the Earl of Abingdon, and in their determination to proceed in the hearing of evidence. The latter circumstance indeed was the more favourable, as the resolution, upon which the witnesses were to be examined, had not been renewed by the Commons. These considerations, however, afforded no solid ground for the mind to rest upon. They only broke in upon it, like faint gleams of sunshine, for a moment, and then were gone. In this situation, the committee could only console themselves by the reflection, that they had done their duty. In looking, however, to their future services, one thing, and only one, seemed practicable; and this was necessary; namely, to complete the new body of evidence, which they had endeavoured to form in the preceding year. The determination to do this rendered another journey on my part indispensable; and I undertook it, broken down as my constitution then was, beginning it in September 1793, and completing it in February 1794.

Mr. Wilberforce, in this interval, had digested his plan of operations; and accordingly, early in the session of 1794, he asked leave to renew his former bill, to abolish that part of the trade, by means of which British merchants supplied foreigners with slaves. This request was opposed by Sir William Yonge; but it was granted, on a division of the House, by a majority of sixty-three to forty votes.

When the bill was brought in, it was opposed by the same member; upon which the House divided; and there appeared for Sir William Yonge's amendment thirty-eight votes, but against it fifty-six.

On a motion for the recommitment of the bill, Lord Sheffield divided the House, against whose motion there was a majority of forty-two. And, on the third reading of it, it was opposed again; but it was at length carried.

The speakers against the bill were: Sir William Yonge, Lord Sheffield, Colonel Tarleton, Alderman Newnham, and Messrs. Payne, Este, Lechmere, Cawthorne, Jenkinson, and Dent. Those who spoke in favour of it were: Messrs. Pitt, Fox, William Smith, Whitbread, Francis, Burdon, Vaughan, Barham, and Serjeants Watson and Adair.

While the foreign Slave-bill was thus passing through its stages in the Commons, Dr. Horsley, Bishop of Rochester, who saw no end to the examinations, while the witnesses were to be examined at the bar of the House of Lords, moved, that they should be taken in future before a committee above-stairs. Dr. Porteus, Bishop of London, and the Lords Guildford, Stanhope, and Grenville, supported this motion. But the Lord Chancellor Thurlow, aided by the Duke of Clarence, and by the Lords Mansfield, Hay, Abingdon, and others, negatived it by a majority of twenty-eight.

At length the bill itself was ushered into the House of Lords. On reading it a second time, it was opposed by the Duke of Clarence, Lord Abingdon, and others. Lord Grenville and the Bishop of Rochester declined supporting it. They alleged as a reason, that they conceived the introduction of it to have been improper, pending the inquiry on the general subject of the Slave Trade. This declaration brought up the Lords Stanhope and Lauderdale, who charged them with inconsistency as professed friends of the cause. At length the bill was lost. During these discussions the examination of the witnesses was resumed by the Lords; but only two of them were heard in this session*.

After this decision the question was in a desperate state; for

* After this the examinations wholly dropped in the House of Lords.

if the Commons would not renew their own resolution, and the Lords would not abolish the foreign part of the Slave-trade, what hope was there of success? It was obvious too, that in the former House, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas voted against each other. In the latter, the Lord Chancellor Thurlow opposed every motion in favour of the cause. The committee therefore were reduced to this;—either they must exert themselves without hope, or they must wait till some change should take place in their favour. As far as I myself was concerned, all exertion was then over. The nervous system was almost shattered to pieces. Both my memory and my hearing failed me. Sudden dizzinesses seized my head. A confused singing in the ears followed me, wherever I went. On going to bed the very stairs seemed to dance up and down under me, so that, misplacing my foot, I sometimes fell. Talking too, if it continued but half an hour, exhausted me, so that profuse perspirations followed; and the same effect was produced even by an active exertion of the mind for the like time. These disorders had been brought on by degrees in consequence of the severe labours necessarily attached to the promotion of the cause. For seven years I had a correspondence to maintain with four hundred persons with my own hand. I had some book or other annually to write in behalf of the cause. In this time I had travelled more than thirty-five thousand miles in search of evidence, and a great part of these journeys in the night. All this time my mind had been on the stretch. It had been bent too to this one subject; for I had not even leisure to attend to my own concerns. The various instances of barbarity, which had come successively to my knowledge within this period, had vexed, harassed, and afflicted it. The wound which these had produced, was rendered still deeper by those cruel disappointments before related, which arose from the reiterated refusal of persons to give their testimony, after I had travelled hundreds of miles in quest of them. But the severest stroke was that inflicted by the persecution, begun and pursued by persons interested in the continuance of the trade, of such witnesses as had been examined against them; and whom, on account of their dependent situation in life, it was most easy

to oppress. As I had been the means of bringing these forward on these occasions, they naturally came to me, when thus persecuted, as the author of their miseries and their ruin. From their supplications and wants it would have been ungenerous and ungrateful to have fled*. These different circumstances, by acting together, had at length brought me into the situation just mentioned; and I was therefore obliged, though very reluctantly, to be borne out of the field, where I had placed the great honour and glory of my life.

* The late Mr. Whitbread, to whom one day in deep affliction on this account I related accidentally a circumstance of this kind, generously undertook, in order to make my mind easy upon the subject, to make good all injuries, which should in future arise to individuals from such persecution; and he repaired these, at different times, at a considerable expense. I feel it a duty to divulge this circumstance, out of respect to the memory of one of the best of men, and of one, whom, if the history of his life were written, it would appear to have been an extraordinary honour to the country to have produced.

CHAPTER XXX.

Continuation from July 1794 to July 1799.—Various motions within this period.

I PURPOSE, though it may seem abrupt after the division which has hitherto been made of the contents of this volume, to throw the events of the next five years into one chapter.

Mr. Wilberforce and the members of the committee, whose constitutions had not suffered like my own, were still left; and they determined to persevere in the promotion of their great object as long as their health and their faculties permitted them. The former, accordingly, in the month of February, 1795, moved in the House of Commons for leave to bring in a bill for the abolition of the Slave Trade. This motion was then necessary, if, according to the resolution of that House, the Slave Trade was to cease in 1796. It was opposed, however, by Sir William Yonge, and unfortunately lost by a majority of seventy-eight to fifty-seven.

In the year 1796, Mr. Wilberforce renewed his efforts in the Commons. He asked leave to bring in a bill for the abolition of the Slave Trade, but in a limited time. The motion was opposed as before; but on a division, there were for it ninety-three, and against it only sixty-seven.

The bill having been brought in, was opposed in its second reading; but it was carried through it by a majority of sixty-four to thirty-one.

In a future stage it was opposed again; but it triumphed by a majority of seventy-six to thirty-one. Mr. Elliott was then put into the chair. Several clauses were adopted; and the first of March, 1797, was fixed for the abolition of the Trade: but in the next stage of it, after a long speech from Mr. Dundas, it was lost by a majority of seventy-four against seventy.

Mr. Francis, who had made a brilliant speech in the last debate, considering that nothing effectual had been yet done on this great question, and wishing that a practical beginning might be made, brought forward soon afterwards, a motion relative to the improvement of the condition of the slaves in the West Indies. This, after a short debate, was negatived without a division. Mr. William Smith also moved an address to His Majesty, that he would be pleased to give directions to lay before the House copies of the several acts relative to regulations in behalf of the slaves, passed by the different colonial assemblies since the year 1788. This motion was adopted by the House. Thus passed away the session of 1796.

In the year 1797, while Mr. Wilberforce was deliberating upon the best measure for the advancement of the cause, Mr. C. Ellis came forward with a new motion. He began by declaring, that he agreed with the abolitionists as to their object; but he differed with them as to the mode of attaining it. The Slave Trade he condemned as a cruel and pernicious system; but, as it had become an inveterate evil, he feared it could not be done away all at once, without injury to the interests of numerous individuals, and even to the Negroes themselves. He concluded by moving an address to His Majesty, humbly requesting, that he would give directions to the governors of the West Indian islands, to recommend it to the colonial assemblies to adopt such measures as might appear to them best calculated to ameliorate the condition of the Negroes, and thereby to remove gradually the Slave Trade; and likewise to assure His Majesty of the readiness of this House to concur in any measure to accelerate this desirable object. This motion was seconded by Mr. Barham. It was opposed, however, by Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Pitt, and others; but was at length carried by a majority of ninety-nine to sixty-three.

In the year 1798, Mr. Wilberforce asked leave to renew his former bill, to abolish the Slave Trade within a limited time. He was supported by Mr. Canning, Mr. Hobhouse, Sir Robert Buxton, Mr. Bouverie, and others. Messrs. Sewell, Bryan Edwards, Henniker, and C. Ellis, took the opposite side of the question. Mr. Ellis, however, observed, that he had no objection to restrict-

ing the Slave Trade to plantations already begun in the colonies; and Mr. Barham professed himself a friend to the abolition, if it could be accomplished in a reasonable way. On a division, there appeared to be for Mr. Wilberforce's motion eighty-three, but against it eighty-seven.

In the year 1799 Mr. Wilberforce, undismayed by these different disappointments, renewed his motion. Colonel M. Wood, Mr. Petrie, and others, among whom were Mr. Windham and Mr. Dundas, opposed it. Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Mr. W. Smith, Sir William Dolben, Sir R. Milbank, Mr. Hobhouse, and Mr. Canning, supported it. Sir R. Milbank contended, that modifications of a system, fundamentally wrong, ought not to be tolerated by the legislature of a free nation. Mr. Hobhouse said, that nothing could be so nefarious as this traffic in blood. It was unjust in its principle: it was cruel in its practice: it admitted of no regulation whatever. The abolition of it was called for equally, by morality and sound policy. Mr. Canning exposed the folly of Mr. Dundas, who had said, that as Parliament had, in the year 1787, left the abolition to the colonial assemblies, it ought not to be taken out of their hands. This great event, he observed, could only be accomplished in two ways; either by these assemblies, or by the Parliament of England. Now the members of the Assembly of Jamaica had professed that they would never abolish the trade. Was it not, therefore, idle to rely upon them for the accomplishment of it? He then took a very comprehensive view of the arguments which had been offered in the course of the debate, and was severe upon the planters in the House, who, he said, had brought into familiar use certain expressions, with no other view than to throw a veil over their odious system. Among these was, "their right to import labourers." But never was the word "labourers" so prostituted, as when it was used for slaves. Never was the word "right" so prostituted, not even when "the rights of man" were talked of; as when the right to trade in man's blood was asserted, by the members of an enlightened assembly. Never was the right of importing these labourers worse defended than when the antiquity of the Slave Trade, and its foundation on the ancient

acts of parliament, were brought forward in its support. We had been cautioned not to lay our unhallowed hands on the ancient institution of the Slave Trade; nor to subvert a fabric, raised by the wisdom of our ancestors, and consecrated by a lapse of ages. But on what principles did we usually respect the institutions of antiquity? We respected them, when we saw some shadow of departed worth and usefulness; or some memorial of what had been creditable to mankind. But was this the case with the Slave Trade? Had it begun in principles of justice or national honour, which the changes of the world alone had impaired? Had it to plead former services and glories in behalf of its present disgrace? In looking at it we saw nothing but crimes and sufferings from the beginning—nothing but what wounded and convulsed our feelings—nothing but what excited indignation and horror. It had not even to plead what could often be said in favour of the most unjustifiable wars. Though conquest had sometimes originated in ambition, and in the worst of motives, yet the conquerors and the conquered were sometimes blended afterwards into one people; so that a system of common interest arose out of former differences. But where was the analogy of the cases? Was it only at the outset that we could trace violence and injustice on the part of the Slave Trade? Were the oppressors and the oppressed so reconciled, that enmities ultimately ceased? No. Was it reasonable then to urge a prescriptive right, not to the fruits of an ancient and forgotten evil, but to a series of new violences; to a chain of fresh enormities; to cruelties continually repeated; and of which every instance inflicted a fresh calamity, and constituted a separate and substantial crime?

The debate being over, the House divided; when it appeared that there were for Mr. Wilberforce's motion seventy-four, but against it eighty-two.

The motion for the general abolition of the Slave Trade having been thus lost again in the Commons, a new motion was made there soon after, by Mr. Henry Thornton, on the same subject. The prosecution of this traffic, on certain parts of the coast of Africa, had become so injurious to the new settlement at

Sierra Leone, that not only its commercial prospects were impeded, but its safety endangered. Mr. Thornton, therefore brought in a bill to confine the Slave Trade within certain limits. But even this bill, though it had for its object only to free a portion of the coast from the ravages of this traffic, was opposed by Mr. Gascoyne, Dent, and others. Petitions also were presented against it. At length, after two divisions, on the first of which there were thirty-two votes to twenty-seven, and on the second thirty-eight to twenty-two, it passed through all its stages.

When it was introduced into the Lords the petitions were renewed against it. Delay also was interposed to its progress by the examination of witnesses. It was not till the fifth of July that the matter was brought to issue. The opponents of the bill, at that time, were the Duke of Clarence, Lord Westmoreland, Lord Thurlow, and the Lords Douglas and Hay, the two latter being Earls of Morton and Kinnoul, in Scotland. The supporters of it were Lord Grenville, who introduced it, Lord Loughborough, Lord Holland, and Dr. Horsley, Bishop of Rochester: the latter was peculiarly eloquent. He began his speech, by arraigning the injustice and impolicy of the trade:—"injustice," he said, "which no considerations of policy could extenuate; impolicy, equal in degree to its injustice."

He well knew that the advocates for the Slave Trade had endeavoured to represent the project for abolition, as a branch of jacobinism; but they who supported it proceeded upon no visionary motives of equality, or of the imprescriptible rights of man. They strenuously upheld the gradations of civil society: but they did, indeed, affirm that these gradations were, both ways, both as they ascended and as they descended, limited. There was an existence of power, to which no good king would aspire; and there was an extreme condition of subjection, to which man could not be degraded without injustice; and this they would maintain, was the condition of the African, who was torn away into slavery.

He then explained the limits of that portion of Africa, which the bill intended to set apart as sacred to peace and liberty. He showed that this was but one-third of the coast; and, therefore,

that two-thirds were yet left for the diabolical speculations of the slave merchants. He expressed his surprise that such witnesses, as those against the bill, should have been introduced at all; he affirmed that their oaths were falsified by their own log-books; and that, from their own accounts, the very healthiest of their vessels were little better than pestilential goals. Mr. Robert Hume, one of these witnesses, had made a certain voyage: he had made it in thirty-three days: he had shipped two hundred and sixty-five slaves, and he had lost twenty-three of them. If he had gone on losing his slaves, all of whom were under twenty-five years of age, at this rate, it was obvious, that he would have lost two hundred and fifty-three of them, if his passage had lasted for a year. Now, in London only, seventeen would have died of that age, out of one thousand within the latter period.

After having exposed the other voyages of Mr. Hume in a similar manner, he entered into a commendation of the views of the Sierra Leone company, and then defended the character of the Africans in their own country, as exhibited in the *Travels* of Mr. Mungo Park. He made a judicious discrimination with respect to slavery, as it existed among them: he showed that this slavery was analogous to that of the heroic and patriarchal ages, and contrasted it with the West Indian in an able manner.

He adverted, lastly, to what had fallen from the learned counsel, who had supported the petitions of the slave-merchants. One of them had put this question to their Lordships, "If the Slave Trade were as wicked as it had been represented, why was there no prohibition of it in the Holy Scriptures?" He then entered into a full defence of the Scriptures on this ground, which he concluded by declaring, that, as St. Paul had coupled men-stealers with murderers, he had condemned the Slave Trade in one of its most productive modes, and generally in all its modes. And here it is worthy of remark, that the word used by the apostle on this occasion, and which has been translated men-stealers, should have been rendered slave traders. This was obvious from the scholiast of Aristophanes, whom he quoted. It was clear, therefore, that the Slave Trade, if murder was forbidden, had been literally forbidden also.

The learned counsel, too, had admonished their lordships, to beware how they adopted the visionary projects of fanatics. He did not know in what direction this shaft was shot; and he cared not. It did not concern him. With the highest reverence for the religion of the land, with the firmest conviction of its truth, and with the deepest sense of the importance of its doctrines, he was proudly conscious, that the general shape and fashion of his life bore nothing of the stamp of fanaticism. But he begged leave, in his turn, to address a word of serious exhortation to their lordships. He exhorted them to beware how they were persuaded to bury, under the opprobrious name of fanaticism, the regard which they owed to the great duties of mercy and justice, for the neglect of which (if they should neglect them) they would be answerable at that tribunal, where no prevarication of witnesses could misinform the judge; and where no subtlety of an advocate, miscalling the names of things, putting evil for good and good for evil, could mislead his judgment.

At length the debate ended: when the bill was lost by a majority of sixty-eight to sixty-one, including personal votes and proxies.

I cannot conclude this chapter without offering a few remarks. And, first, I may observe, as the substance of the debates has not been given for the period which it contains, that Mr. Wilberforce, upon whom too much praise cannot be bestowed for his perseverance from year to year, amidst the disheartening circumstances which attended his efforts, brought every new argument to bear, which either the discovery of new light, or the events of the times, produced. I may observe also, in justice to the memories of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, that there was no debate within this period, in which they did not take a part; and in which they did not irradiate others from the profusion of their own light; and, thirdly, that in consequence of the efforts of the three, conjoined with those of others, the great cause of the abolition was secretly gaining ground. Many members who were not connected with the trade, but who had yet hitherto supported it, were on the point of conversion. Though the question had oscillated backwards and forwards, so that an ordinary spectator could have discovered no

gleam of hope at these times, nothing is more certain, than that the powerful eloquence then displayed had smoothed the resistance to it, had shortened its vibrations, and had prepared it for a state of rest.

With respect to the West-Indians themselves, some of them began to see through the mists of prejudice, which had covered them. In the year 1794, when the bill for the abolition of the foreign Slave Trade was introduced, Mr. Vaughan and Mr. Barham supported it. They called upon the planters in the House to give way to humanity, where their own interests could not be affected by their submission. This, indeed, may be said to have been no mighty thing; but it was a frank confession of the injustice of the Slave Trade, and the beginning of the change which followed, both with respect to themselves and others.

With respect to the old friends of the cause, it is with regret I mention, that it lost the support of Mr. Windham within this period; and this regret is increased by the consideration, that he went off on the avowed plea of expediency against moral rectitude; a doctrine, which, at least upon this subject, he had reprobated for ten years. It was, however, some consolation, as far as talents were concerned, (for there can be none for the loss of virtuous feeling,) that Mr. Canning, a new member, should have so ably supplied his place.

Of the gradual abolitionists, whom we have always considered as the most dangerous enemies of the cause, Mr. Jenkinson (afterwards Earl of Liverpool), Mr. Addington (subsequently Lord Sidmouth), and Mr. Dundas (afterwards Lord Melville), continued their opposition during all this time. Of the first two I shall say nothing at present; but I cannot pass over the conduct of the latter. He was the first person, as we have seen, to propose the gradual abolition of the Slave Trade; and he fixed a time for its cessation on the 1st of January, 1800. His sincerity on this occasion was doubted by Mr. Fox at the very outset; for he immediately rose and said, that "something so mischievous had come out, something so like a foundation had been laid for preserving, not only for years to come, but for anything he knew, for ever, this detestable traffic, that he felt it his duty immediately to deprecate all such delusions

upon the country." Mr. Pitt, who spoke soon afterwards, in reply to an argument advanced by Mr. Dundas, maintained, that "at whatever period the House should say that the Slave Trade should actually cease, this defence would equally be set up; for it would be just as good an argument in seventy years hence, as it was against the abolition then." And these remarks Mr. Dundas verified in a singular manner within this period: for in the year 1796, when his own bill, as amended in the Commons, was to take place, he was one of the most strenuous opposers of it; and in the year 1799, when in point of consistency it devolved upon him to propose it to the House, in order that the trade might cease on the 1st of January, 1800, (which was the time of his own original choice, or a time unfettered by parliamentary amendment,) he was the chief instrument of throwing out Mr. Wilberforce's bill, which promised even a longer period to its continuance: so that it is obvious, that there was no time, within his own limits, when the abolition would have suited him, notwithstanding his profession, "that he had always been a warm advocate for the measure."

CHAPTER XXXI.

Continuation from July 1799 to July 1805.—Various motions within this period.

The question had now been brought forward in almost every possible way, and yet had been eventually lost. The total and immediate abolition had been attempted; and then the gradual. The gradual again had been tried for the year 1793, then for 1795, and then for 1796, at which period it was decreed, but never allowed to be executed. An abolition of a part of the trade, as it related to the supply of foreigners with slaves, was the next measure proposed; and when this failed, the abolition of another part of it, as it related to the making of a certain portion of the coast of Africa sacred to liberty, was attempted; but this failed also. Mr. Wilberforce therefore thought it prudent, not to press the abolition as a mere annual measure, but to allow members time to digest the eloquence, which had been bestowed upon it for the last five years, and to wait till some new circumstances should favour its introduction. Accordingly he allowed the years 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803, to pass over without any further parliamentary notice than the moving for certain papers; during which he took an opportunity of assuring the House, that he had not grown cool in the cause, but that he would agitate it in a future session.

In the year 1804, which was fixed upon for renewed exertion, the committee for the abolition of the Slave Trade elected James Stephen, Zachary Macaulay, Henry Brougham, Esqrs., and William Phillips, into their own body. Four other members, also, Robert Grant, and John Thornton, Esqrs., and William Manser and William Allen, were afterwards added to the list. Among the reasons for fixing upon this year, one may be assigned, namely, that the Irish members, in consequence of the union which had taken place between the two countries, had then

all taken their seats in the House of Commons; and that most of them were friendly to the cause.

This being the situation of things, Mr. Wilberforce, on the 30th of March, asked leave to renew his bill for the abolition of the Slave Trade within a limited time. Mr. Fuller opposed the motion. A debate ensued. Colonel Tarleton, Mr. Devaynes, Mr. Addington, and Mr. Manning spoke against it. The latter, however, notwithstanding his connection with the West Indies, said he would support it, if an indemnification were offered to the planters, in case any actual loss should accompany the measure.

Sir William Geary questioned the propriety of immediate abolition.

Sir Robert Buxton, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Barham spoke in favour of the motion.

Mr. William Smith rose, when the latter had seated himself, and complimented him on this change of sentiment, so honourable to him, inasmuch as he had espoused the cause of humanity against his supposed interest as a planter. Mr. Leigh said that he would not tolerate such a traffic for a moment. All the feelings of nature revolted at it. Lord de Blaquiere observed, "it was the first time the question had been proposed to Irishmen as legislators. He believed it would be supported by most of them. As to the people of Ireland, he could pledge himself that they were hostile to this barbarous traffic." An amendment having been proposed by Mr. Manning, a division took place upon it, when leave was given to bring in the bill, by a majority of one hundred and twenty-four to forty-nine.

On the 7th of June, when the second reading of the bill was moved, it was opposed by Sir W. Yonge, Dr. Laurence, Mr. C. Brook, Mr. Dent, and others. Among these Lord Castlereagh professed himself a friend to the abolition of the trade, but he differed as to the mode. Sir J. Wrottesley approved of the principle of the bill, but would oppose it in some of its details. Mr. Windham allowed the justice, but differed as to the expediency, of the measure. Mr. Deverell professed himself to have been a friend to it; but he had then changed his mind. Sir Laurence Parsons wished to see a plan for the gradual extinction

of the trade. Lord Temple affirmed that the bill would seal the death-warrant of every White inhabitant of the islands. The second reading was supported by Sir Ralph Milbank, Messrs. Pitt, Fox, William Smith, Whitbread, Francis, Barham, and Grenfell, and Sir John Newport. Mr. Grenfell observed, that he could not give a silent vote, when the character of the country was concerned. When the question of the abolition first came before the public, he was a warm friend to it; and from that day to this he had cherished the same feelings. He assured Mr. Wilberforce of his constant support. Sir John Newport stated that the Irish nation took a virtuous interest in this noble cause. He ridiculed the idea that the trade and manufactures of the country would suffer by the measure in contemplation; but, even if they should suffer, he would oppose it. "Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum." Upon a division, there appeared for the second reading one hundred, and against it forty-two.

On the 12th of June, when a motion was made to go into a committee upon the bill, it was opposed by Messrs. Fuller, C. Brook, C. Ellis, Dent, Deverell, and Manning: and it was supported by Sir Robert Buxton, Mr. Barham, and the Hon. J. S. Cocks. The latter condemned the imprudence of the planters. Instead of profiting by the discussions, which had taken place, and making wise provisions against the great event of the abolition, which would sooner or later take place, they had only thought of new stratagems to defeat it. He declared his abhorrence of the trade, which he considered to be a national disgrace. The House divided: when there were seventy-nine for the motion, and against it, twenty.

On the 27th of June the bill was opposed in its last stage by Sir W. Young, Messrs. Dickenson, G. Rose, Addington, and Dent; and supported by Messrs. Pitt, W. Smith, Francis, and Barham; when it was carried by a majority of sixty-nine to thirty-six. It was then taken up to the Lords; but on a motion of Lord Hawkesbury, then a member of that House, the discussion of it was postponed to the next year.

The session being ended, the committee for the abolition of the Slave Trade increased its number, by the election of the Right

Honourable Lord Teignmouth, Dr. Dickson, and Wilson Birkbeck, as members.

In the year 1805, Mr. Wilberforce renewed his motion of the former year. Colonel Tarleton, Sir William Yonge, Mr. Fuller, and Mr. Gascoyne opposed it. Leave, however, was given him to introduce his bill.

On the second reading of it, a serious opposition took place; and an amendment was moved for postponing it till that day six months. The amendment was opposed by Mr. Fox and Mr. Huddlestone. The latter could not help lifting his voice against this monstrous traffic in the sinews and blood of man, the toleration of which had so long been the disgrace of the British legislature. He did not charge the enormous guilt resulting from it upon the nation at large; for the nation had washed its hands of it by the numerous petitions it had sent against it; and it had since been a matter of astonishment to all Christendom, how the constitutional guardians of British freedom should have sanctioned elsewhere the greatest system of cruelty and oppression in the world.

He said that a curse attended this trade even in the mode of defending it. By a certain fatality, none but the vilest arguments were brought forward, which corrupted the very persons who used them. Every one of these was built on the narrow ground of interest—of pecuniary profit—of sordid gain—in opposition to every high consideration—to every motive that had reference to humanity, justice, and religion—or to that great principle which comprehended them all. Place only before the most determined advocate of this odious traffic the exact image of himself in the garb and harness of a slave, dragged and whipped about like a beast; place this image also before him, and paint it as that of one without a ray of hope to cheer him; and you would extort from him the reluctant confession, that he would not endure for an hour the misery to which he condemned his fellow-man for life. How dared he, then, to use this selfish plea of interest against the voice of the generous sympathies of his nature? But even upon this narrow ground, the advocates for the traffic had been defeated. If the unhallowed argument of expediency was worth anything

when opposed to moral rectitude, or if it were to supersede the precepts of Christianity, where was a man to stop, or what line was he to draw? For anything he knew, it might be physically true, that human blood was the best manure for the land; but who ought to shed it on that account? True expediency, however, was, where it ever would be found, on the side of that system which was most merciful and just. He asked how it happened, that sugar could be imported cheaper from the East Indies than from the West, notwithstanding the vast difference of the length of the voyages, but on account of the impolicy of slavery; or that it was made in the former case by the industry of free men, and in the latter by the languid drudgery of slaves.

As he had had occasion to advert to the Eastern part of the world, he would make an observation upon an argument, which had been collected from that quarter. The condition of the Negroes in the West Indies had been lately compared with that of the Hindoos. But he would observe that the Hindoo, miserable as his hovel was, had sources of pride and happiness, to which not only the West Indian slave, but even his master, was a stranger. He was to be sure a peasant; and his industry was subservient to the gratifications of an European lord; but he was, in his own belief, vastly superior to him. He viewed him as one of the lowest cast. He would not on any consideration eat from the same plate. He would not suffer his son to marry the daughter of his master, even if she could bring him all the West Indies as her portion. He would observe, too, that the Hindoo peasant drank his water from his native well; that, if his meal were scanty, he received it from the hand of her, who was most dear to him; that, when he laboured, he laboured for her and his offspring. His daily task being finished, he reposed with his family. No retrospect of the happiness of former days, compared with existing misery, disturbed his slumber, nor horrid dreams occasioned him to wake in agony at the dawn of day. No barbarous sounds of cracking whips reminded him, that with the form and image of a man his destiny was that of the beast of the field. Let the advocates for the bloody traffic state what they had to set off on their side of the question against the com-

forts and independence of the man, with whom they compared the slave.

The amendment was supported by Sir William Yonge, Sir William Pulteney, Colonel Tarleton, Messrs. Gascoyne, C. Brook, and Hiley Addington. On dividing the House upon it, there appeared for it seventy-seven, but against it only seventy.

This loss of the question, after it had been carried in the last year by so great a majority, being quite unexpected, was a matter of severe disappointment; and might have discouraged the friends of the cause in this infancy of their renewed efforts, if they had not discovered the reason of its failure. After due consideration it appeared, that no fewer than nine members, who had never been absent once in sixteen years when it was agitated, gave way to engagements on the day of the motion, from a belief that it was safe. It appeared also, that out of the great number of Irish members, who supported it in the former year, only nine were in the House, when it was lost. It appeared also that, previously to this event, a canvass, more importunate than had been heard of on any former occasion, had been made among the latter by those interested in the continuance of the trade. Many of these, unacquainted with the detail of the subject, like the English members, admitted the dismal representations, which were then made to them. The desire of doing good on the one hand, and the fear of doing injury on the other, perplexed them; and in this dubious state they absented themselves at the time mentioned.

The causes of the failure having been found accidental, and capable of a remedy, it was resolved, that an attempt should be made immediately in the House in a new form. Accordingly Lord Henry Petty signified his intention of bringing in a bill for the abolition of the foreign part of the Slave Trade; but the impeachment of Lord Melville, and other weighty matters coming on, the notice was not acted upon in that session.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Continuation from July 1805 to July 1806—Author returns to his duty in the committee—Travels again round the kingdom—Death of Mr. Pitt—His character, as it related to the question—Motion for the abolition of the foreign Slave Trade—Resolution to take measures for the total abolition of it—Address to the King to negotiate with foreign powers for their concurrence in it—Motion to prevent any new vessel going into the trade—these carried through both Houses of Parliament.

It was now almost certain, to the inexpressible joy of the committee, that the cause, with proper vigilance, could be carried in the next session in the House of Commons. It became them therefore to prepare to support it. In adverting to measures for this purpose, it occurred to them, that the House of Lords, if the question should be then carried to them from the Commons, might insist upon hearing evidence on the general subject. But, alas, even the body of witnesses, which had been last collected, was broken by death or dispersion! It was therefore to be formed again. In this situation it devolved upon me, as I had now returned to the committee after an absence of nine years, to take another journey for this purpose.

This journey I performed with extraordinary success. In the course of it I had also much satisfaction on another account. I found the old friends of the cause still faithful to it. It was remarkable, however, that the youth of the rising generation knew but little about the question. For the last eight or nine years the committee had not circulated any books; and the debates in the Commons during that time had not furnished them with the means of an adequate knowledge concerning it. When, however, I conversed with these, as I travelled along, I discovered a profound attention to what I said; an earnest desire to know more of the subject; and a generous warmth in favour of the injured Africans, which I foresaw could soon be turned into enthusiasm. Hence I perceived that the cause furnished us with endless sources of rallying: and that the ardour

which we had seen with so much admiration in former years, could be easily renewed.

I had scarcely finished my journey, when Mr. Pitt died. This event took place in January 1806. I shall stop therefore to make a few observations upon his character, as it related to this cause. This I feel myself bound in justice to do, because his sincerity towards it has been generally questioned.

The way, in which Mr. Pitt became acquainted with this question, has already been explained. A few doubts having been removed, when it was first started, he professed himself a friend to the abolition. The first proof, which he gave of his friendship to it is known but to few; but it is, nevertheless, true, that so early as in 1788, he occasioned a communication to be made to the French government, in which he recommended an union of the two countries for the promotion of the great measure. This proposition seemed to be then new and strange to the Court of France; and the answer was not favourable.

From this time his efforts were reduced within the boundaries of his own power. As far, however, as he had scope, he exerted them. If we look at him in his parliamentary capacity, it must be acknowledged by all, that he took an active, strenuous, and consistent part, and this year after year, by which he realized his professions. In my own private communications with him, which were frequent, he never failed to give proofs of a similar disposition. I had always free access to him. I had no previous note or letter to write for admission. Whatever papers I wanted, he ordered. He exhibited also in his conversation with me on these occasions marks of a more than ordinary interest in the welfare of the cause. Among the subjects, which were then started, there was one, which was always near his heart. This was the civilization of Africa. He looked upon this great work as a debt due to that continent for the many injuries we had inflicted upon it: and had the abolition succeeded sooner, as in the infancy of his exertions he had hoped, I know he had a plan, suited no doubt to the capaciousness of his own mind, for such establishments in Africa, as he conceived would promote in due me this important end.

I believe it will be said, notwithstanding what I have advanced, that if Mr. Pitt had exerted himself as the Minister of the country in behalf of the abolition, he could have carried it. This brings the matter to an issue; for unquestionably the charge of insincerity, as it related to this great question, arose from the mistaken notion, that, as his measures in Parliament were supported by great majorities, he could do as he pleased there. But they who hold this opinion, must be informed, that there were great difficulties, against which he had to struggle on this subject. The Lord Chancellor Thurlow ran counter to his wishes almost at the very outset. Lord Liverpool, and Mr. Dundas, did the same. Thus, to go no further, three of the most powerful members of the cabinet were in direct opposition to him. The abolition then, amidst this difference of opinion, could never become a cabinet measure; but if so, then all his parliamentary efforts in this case wanted their usual authority, and he could only exert his influence as a private man*.

But a difficulty, still more insuperable, presented itself, in an occurrence which took place in the year 1791, but which is much too delicate to be mentioned. The explanation of it, however, would convince the reader, that all the efforts of Mr. Pitt from that day were rendered useless, I mean, as to bringing the question, as a Minister of State, to a favourable issue.

But though Mr. Pitt did not carry this great question, he was yet one of the greatest supporters of it. He fostered it in its infancy. If, in his public situation, he had then set his face against it, where would have been our hope? He upheld it also in its childhood; and though in this state of its existence it did not gain from his protection all the strength which it was expected it would have acquired, he yet kept it from falling, till his successors, in whose administration a greater number of favourable circumstances concurred to give it vigour, brought it to triumphant maturity.

Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox, having been called to the head

* This he did with great effect on one or two occasions. On the motion of Mr. Cawthorne in 1791, the cause hung as it were by a thread; and would have failed that day, to my knowledge, but for his seasonable exertions.

of the executive government on the death of Mr. Pitt, the cause was ushered into Parliament under new auspices. In a former year His Majesty had issued a proclamation, by which British merchants were forbidden (with certain defined exceptions) to import slaves into the colonies, which had been conquered by the British arms in the course of the war. This circumstance afforded an opportunity of trying the question in the House of Commons with the greatest hope of success. Accordingly Sir A. Pigott, the Attorney-General, as an officer of the crown, brought in a bill on the thirty-first of March 1806, the first object of which was, to give effect to the proclamation now mentioned. The second was, to prohibit British subjects from being engaged in importing slaves into the colonies of any foreign power, whether hostile or neutral. And the third was, to prohibit British subjects and British capital from being employed in carrying on the Slave Trade in foreign ships; and also to prevent the outfit of foreign ships from British ports.

Sir A. Pigott, on the introduction of this bill, made an appropriate speech. The bill was supported by Mr. Fox, Sir William Yonge, Mr. Brook, and Mr. Bagwell; but opposed by Generals Tarleton and Gascoyne, Mr. Rose, Sir Robert Peel, and Sir Charles Price. On the third reading, a division being called for, there appeared for it thirty-five, and against it only thirteen.

On the 7th of May it was introduced into the Lords. The supporters of it there were, the Duke of Gloucester, Lord Grenville, the Bishops of London and St. Asaph, the Earl of Buckinghamshire, and the Lords Holland, Lauderdale, Auckland, Sidmouth, and Ellenborough. The opposers were, the Dukes of Clarence and Sussex, the Marquis of Sligo, the Earl of Westmoreland, and the Lords Eldon and Sheffield. At length a division took place, when there appeared to be in favour of it thirty-three, and against it eighteen.

During the discussions, to which this bill gave birth, Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox declared in substance, in their respective Houses of Parliament, that they felt the question of the Slave Trade to be one, which involved the dearest interests of humanity, and the most urgent claims of policy, justice, and religion;

and that, should they succeed in affecting its abolition, they would regard that success as entailing more true glory on their administration, and more honour and advantage on their country, than any other measure, in which they could be engaged. The bill having passed, (the first, which dismembered this cruel trade,) it was thought proper to follow it up in a prudent manner; and, as there was not then time in the advanced period of the session to bring in another for the total extinction of it, to move a resolution, by which both Houses should record those principles, on which the propriety of the latter measure was founded. It was judged also expedient that Mr. Fox, as the Prime Minister in the House of Commons, should introduce it there.

On the 10th of June Mr. Fox rose. He began by saying that the motion, with which he should conclude, would tend in its consequences to effect the total abolition of the Slave Trade; and he confessed that, since he had sat in that House (a period of between thirty and forty years), if he had done nothing else, but had only been instrumental in carrying through this measure, he should think his life well spent; and should retire quite satisfied, that he had not lived in vain.

In adverting to the principle of the trade, he noticed some strong expressions of Mr. Burke concerning it. "To deal in human flesh and blood," said that great man, "or to deal, not in the labour of men, but in men themselves, was to devour the root, instead of enjoying the fruit of human diligence."

Mr. Fox then took a view of the opinions of different members of the House on this great question; and showed that, though many had opposed the abolition, all but two or three, among whom were the members for Liverpool, had confessed, that the trade ought to be done away. He then went over the different resolutions of the House on the subject, and concluded from thence, that they were bound to support his motion.

He combated the argument, that the abolition would ruin the West Indian islands. In doing this he paid a handsome compliment to the memory of Mr. Pitt, whose speech upon this particular point was, he said, the most powerful and convincing of any he had ever heard. Indeed they, who had not heard it,

could have no notion of it. It was a speech, of which he would say with the Roman author, reciting the words of the Athenian orator, "Quid esset, si ipsum audivissetis!" It was a speech no less remarkable for splendid eloquence, than for solid sense and convincing reason; supported by calculations founded on facts, and conclusions drawn from premises, as correctly as if they had been mathematical propositions; all tending to prove that, instead of the West Indian plantations suffering an injury, they would derive a material benefit by the abolition of the Slave Trade. He then called upon the friends of this great man to show their respect for his memory by their votes; and he concluded with moving, "that this House, considering the African Slave Trade to be contrary to the principles of justice, humanity, and policy, will, with all practicable expedition, take effectual measures for the abolition of the said trade, in such a manner, and at such a period, as may be deemed advisable."

Sir Ralph Milbank rose, and seconded the motion.

General Tarleton rose next. He deprecated the abolition, on account of the effect which it would have on the trade and revenue of the country.

Mr. Francis said the merchants of Liverpool were at liberty to ask for compensation; but he, for one, would never grant it for the loss of a trade, which had been declared to be contrary to humanity and justice. As an uniform friend to this great cause, he wished Mr. Fox had not introduced a resolution, but a real bill for the abolition of the Slave Trade. He believed that both Houses were then disposed to do it away. He wished the golden opportunity might not be lost.

Lord Castlereagh thought it a proposition, on which no one could entertain a doubt, that the Slave Trade was a great evil in itself; and that it was the duty and policy of Parliament to extirpate it; but he did not think the means offered were adequate to the end proposed. The abolition, as a political question, was a difficult one. The year 1796 had been once fixed upon by the House, as the period when the trade was to cease; but, when the time arrived, the resolution was not executed. This was a proof, either that the House did not wish for the event, or that

they judged it impracticable. It would be impossible, he said, to get other nations to concur in the measure; and even if they were to concur, it could not be effected. We might restrain the subjects of the parent-state from following the trade; but we could not those in our colonies. A hundred frauds would be committed by these, which we could not detect. He did not mean by this, that the evil was to go on for ever. Had a wise plan been proposed at first, it might have been half-cured by this time. The present resolution would do no good. It was vague, indefinite, and unintelligible. Such resolutions were only the slave-merchants' harvests. They would go for more slaves than usual in the interim. He should have advised a system of duties on fresh importations of slaves, progressively increasing to a certain extent; and that the amount of these duties should be given to the planters, as a bounty to encourage the Negro population upon their estates. Nothing could be done, unless we went hand in hand with the latter. But he should deliver himself more fully on this subject, when any thing specific should be brought forward in the shape of a bill.

Sir S. Romilly, the Solicitor-General, differed from Lord Castlereagh; for he thought the resolution of Mr. Fox was very simple and intelligible. If there was a proposition vague and indefinite, it was that advanced by the noble lord, of a system of duties on fresh importations, rising progressively, and this under the patronage and co-operation of the planters. Who could measure the space between the present time and the abolition of the trade, if that measure were to depend upon the approbation of the colonies.

The cruelty and injustice of the Slave Trade had been established by evidence beyond a doubt. It had been shown to be carried on by rapine, robbery, and murder; by fomenting and encouraging wars; by false accusations; and imaginary crimes. The unhappy victims were torn away not only in the time of war, but of profound peace. They were then carried across the Atlantic, in a manner too horrible to describe; and afterwards subjected to eternal slavery. In support of the continuance of such a traffic, he knew of nothing but assertions already disproved, and

arguments already refuted. Since the year 1796, when it was to cease by a resolution of Parliament, no less than three hundred and sixty thousand Africans had been torn away from their native land. What an accumulation was this to our former guilt!

General Gascoyne made two extraordinary assertions: First, that the trade was defensible on Scriptural ground.—"Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen, that are round about thee; of them shall you have bondmen and bondmaids. And thou shalt take them as an heritance for thy children after thee to inherit them for a possession; they shall be thy bondmen for ever." Secondly, that the trade had been so advantageous to this country, that it would have been advisable even to institute a new one, if the old had not existed.

Mr. Wilberforce replied to General Gascoyne. He then took a view of the speech of Lord Castlereagh, which he answered point by point. In the course of his observations he showed that the system of duties progressively increasing, as proposed by the noble lord, would be one of the most effectual modes of perpetuating the Slave Trade. He exposed, also, the false foundation of the hope of any reliance on the co-operation of the colonists. The House, he said, had, on the motion of Mr. Ellis, in the year 1797, prayed his Majesty to consult with the colonial legislatures to take such measures, as might conduce to the gradual abolition of the African Slave Trade. This address was transmitted to them by Lord Melville. It was received in some of the islands with a declaration, "that they possibly might, in some instances, endeavour to improve the condition of their slaves; but they should do this, not with any view to the abolition of the Slave Trade; for they considered that trade as their birth-right, which could not be taken from them; and that we should deceive ourselves by supposing, that they would agree to such a measure." He desired to add to this the declaration of General Prevost in his public letter from Dominica. Did he not say, when asked what steps had been taken there in consequence of the resolution of the House in 1797, "that the act of the legislature, entitled an act for the encouragement, protection, and better government of slaves, appeared to him to have been considered, from the day

it was passed until this hour, as a political measure to avert the interference of the mother country in the management of the slaves."

Sir William Yonge censured the harsh language of Sir Samuel Romilly, who had applied the terms rapine, robbery, and murder to those, who were connected with the Slave Trade. He considered the resolution of Mr. Fox as a prelude to a bill for the abolition of that traffic, and this bill as a prelude to emancipation, which would not only be dangerous in itself, but would change the state of property in the islands.

Lord Henry Petty, after having commented on the speeches of Sir Samuel Romilly and Lord Castlereagh, proceeded to state his own opinion on the trade; which was, that it was contrary to justice, humanity, and sound policy, all of which he considered to be inseparable. On its commencement in Africa the wickedness began. It produced there fraud and violence, robbery and murder. It gave birth to false accusations, and a mockery of justice. It was the parent of every crime, which could at once degrade and afflict the human race. After spreading vice and misery all over this continent, it doomed its unhappy victims to hardships and cruelties which were worse than death. The first of these was conspicuous in their transportation. It was found there, that cruelty begat cruelty; that the system, wicked in its beginning, was equally so in its progress; and that it perpetuated its miseries wherever it was carried on. Nor was it baneful only to the objects, but to the promoters of it. The loss of British seamen in this traffic was enormous. One-fifth of all, who were employed in it, perished; that is, they became the victims of a system, which was founded on fraud, robbery, and murder; and which procured to the British nation nothing but the execration of mankind. Nor had we yet done with the evils which attended it; for it brought in its train the worst of all moral effects, not only as it respected the poor slaves, when transported to the colonies, but as it respected those who had concerns with them there. The arbitrary power, which it conferred, afforded men of bad dispositions full scope for the exercise of their passions: and it rendered men, constitutionally of good dispositions, callous to the misery of others. Thus it depraved the nature of all who were

connected with it. These considerations had made him a friend to the abolition, from the time he was capable of reasoning upon it. They were considerations, also, which determined the House, in the year 1782, to adopt a measure of the same kind as the present. Had anything happened to change the opinion of members since? On the contrary, they had now the clearest evidence, that all the arguments then used against the abolition were fallacious; being founded, not upon truth, but on assertions devoid of all truth, and derived from ignorance or prejudice.

Having made these remarks, he proved, by a number of facts, the folly of the argument, that the Africans laboured under such a total degradation of mental and moral faculties, that they were made for slavery.

He then entered into the great subject of population. He showed that in all countries, where there were no unnatural hardships, mankind would support themselves. He applied this reasoning to the Negro population in the West Indies; which he maintained could not only be kept up, but increased, without any further importations from Africa.

He then noticed the observations of Sir William Yonge, on the words of Sir Samuel Romilly; and desired him to reserve his indignation for those, who were guilty of acts of rapine, robbery, and murder, instead of venting it on those, who only did their duty in describing them. Never were accounts more shocking than those lately sent to government from the West Indies. Lord Seaforth, and the Attorney-General, could not refrain, in explaining them, from the use of the words murder and torture. And did it become members of that House (in order to accommodate the nerves of the friends of the Slave Trade) to soften down their expressions, when they were speaking on that subject; and to desist from calling that murder and torture, for which a Governor, and the Attorney-General, of one of the islands could find no better name?

After making observations relative to the co-operation of foreign powers in this great work, he hoped that the House would not suffer itself to be drawn, either by opposition or by ridicule, to the right or to the left; but that it would advance straight

forward to the accomplishment of the most magnanimous act of justice, that was ever achieved by any legislature in the world.

Mr. Rose declared, that on the very first promulgation of this question, he had proposed to the friends of it the very plan of his noble friend Lord Castlereagh; namely, a system of progressive duties, and of bounties for the promotion of the Negro population. This he said to show that he was friendly to the principle of the measure. He would now observe, that he did not wholly like the present resolution. It was too indefinite. He wished, also, that something had been said on the subject of compensation. He was fearful, also, lest the abolition should lead to the dangerous change of emancipation. The Negroes, he said, could not be in a better state, or more faithful to their masters, than they were. In three attacks made by the enemy on Dominica, where he had a large property, arms had been put into their hands; and every one of them had exerted himself faithfully. With respect to the cruel acts in Barbados, an account of which had been sent to government by Lord Seaforth and the Attorney-General of Barbados, he had read them; and never had he read anything on this subject with more horror. He would agree to the strongest measures for the prevention of such acts in future. He would even give up the colony, which should refuse to make the wilful murder of a slave felony. But as to the other, or common, evils complained of, he thought the remedy should be gradual; and such also as the planters would concur in. He would nevertheless not oppose the present resolution.

Mr. Barham considered compensation but reasonable, where losses were to accrue from the measure, when it should be put in execution; but he believed that the amount of it would be much less than was apprehended. He considered emancipation, though so many fears had been expressed about it, as forming no objection to the abolition, though he had estates in the West Indies himself. Such a measure, if it could be accomplished successfully, would be an honour to the country, and a blessing to the planters; but preparation must be made for it by rendering the slaves fit for freedom, and by creating in them an inclination to free labour. Such a change could only be the work of time.

Sir John Newport said that the expressions of Sir S. Romilly, which had given such offence, had been used by others; and would be used with propriety, while the trade lasted. Some slave-dealers of Liverpool had lately attempted to prejudice certain merchants of Ireland in their favour. But none of their representations answered; and it was remarkable, that the reply made to them was in these words. "We will have no share in a traffic, consisting in rapine, blood, and murder." He then took a survey of a system of duties progressively increasing, and showed that it would be utterly inefficient; and that there was no real remedy for the different evils complained of, but in the immediate prohibition of the trade.

Mr. Canning renewed his professions of friendship to the cause. He did not like the present resolution; yet he would vote for it. He should have been better pleased with a bill, which would strike at once at the root of this detestable commerce.

Mr. Manning wished the question to be deferred to the next session. He hoped compensation would then be brought forward as connected with it. Nothing, however, effectual could be done without the concurrence of the planters.

Mr. William Smith noticed, in a striking manner, the different inconsistencies in the arguments of those, who contended for the continuance of the trade.

Mr. Windham deprecated not only the Slave Trade, but slavery also. They were essentially connected with each other. They were both evils, and ought both of them to be done away. Indeed, if emancipation would follow the abolition, he should like the latter measure the better. Rapine, robbery, and murder, were the true characteristics of this traffic. The same epithets had not indeed been applied to slavery, because this was a condition, in which some part of the human race had been at every period of the history of the world. It was, however, a state, which ought not to be allowed to exist. But, notwithstanding all these confessions, he should weigh well the consequences of the abolition before he gave it his support. It would be on a balance between the evils themselves and the consequences of

removing them, that he should decide for himself on this question.

Mr. Fox took a view of all the arguments, which had been advanced by the opponents of the abolition; and having given an appropriate answer to each, the House divided, when there appeared for the resolution one hundred and fourteen, and against it but fifteen.

Immediately after this division, Mr. Wilberforce moved an address to His Majesty, "praying that he would be graciously pleased to direct a negotiation to be entered into, by which foreign powers should be invited to co-operate with His Majesty in measures to be adopted for the abolition of the African Slave Trade."

This address was carried without a division. It was also moved and carried, that "these resolutions be communicated to the Lords; and that their concurrence should be desired therein."

On the 24th of June, the Lords met to consider of the resolution and address. The Earl of Westmoreland proposed that both counsel and evidence should be heard against them; but his proposition was overruled.

Lord Grenville then read the resolution of the Commons. This resolution, he said, stated first, that the Slave Trade was contrary to humanity, justice, and sound policy. That it was contrary to humanity was obvious; for humanity might be said to be sympathy for the distress of others, or a desire to accomplish benevolent ends by good means. But did not the Slave Trade convey ideas the very reverse of this definition? It deprived men of all those comforts, in which it pleased the Creator to make the happiness of his creatures to consist,—of the blessings of society, —of the charities of the dear relationships of husband, wife, father, son, and kindred,—of the due discharge of the relative duties of these,—and of that freedom, which in its pure and natural sense was one of the greatest gifts of God to man.

It was impossible to read the evidence, as it related to this trade, without acknowledging the inhumanity of it, and our own disgrace. By what means was it kept up in Africa? By wars

instigated, not by the passions of the natives, but by our avarice. He knew it would be said in reply to this, that the slaves, who were purchased by us, would be put to death, if we were not to buy them. But what should we say, if it should turn out, that we were the causes of those very cruelties, which we affected to prevent? But, if it were not so, ought the first nation in the world to condescend to be the executioner of savages?

Another way of keeping up the Slave Trade was by the practice of man-stealing. The evidence was particularly clear upon this head. This practice included violence, and often bloodshed. The inhumanity of it therefore could not be doubted.

The unhappy victims, being thus procured, were conveyed, he said, across the Atlantic in a manner which justified the charge of inhumanity again. Indeed the suffering here was so great, that neither the mind could conceive, nôr the tongue describe, it. He had said on a former occasion, that in their transportation there was a greater portion of misery condensed within a smaller space, than had ever existed in the known world. He would repeat his words; for he did not know, how he could express himself better on the subject. And, after all these horrors, what was their destiny? It was such, as justified the charge in the resolution again: for, after having survived the sickness arising from the passage, they were doomed to interminable slavery.

We had been, he said, so much accustomed to words, descriptive of the cruelty of this traffic, that we had almost forgotten their meaning. He wished that some person, educated as an Englishman, with suitable powers of eloquence, but now for the first time informed of all the horrors of it, were to address their lordships upon it, and he was sure, that they would instantly determine that it should cease. But the continuance of it had rendered cruelty familiar to us; and the recital of its horrors had been so frequent, that we could now hear them stated without being affected as we ought to be. He intreated their lordships, however, to endeavour to conceive the hard case of the unhappy victims of it; and as he had led them to the last stage of their miserable existence, which was in the colonies, to

contemplate it there. They were there under the arbitrary will of a cruel task-master from morning till night. When they went to rest, would not their dreams be frightful? When they awoke, would they not awake—

> ——— only to discover sights of woe,
> Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
> And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
> That comes to all; but torture without end
> Still urges?———

They knew no change, except in the humour of their masters, to whom their whole destiny was entrusted. We might, perhaps, flatter ourselves with saying, that they were subject to the will of Englishmen. But Englishmen were not better than others, when in possession of arbitrary power. The very fairest exercise of it was a never-failing corrupter of the heart. But suppose it were allowed that self-interest might operate some little against cruelty; yet where was the interest of the overseer or the driver? But he knew it would be said, that the evils complained of in the colonies had been mitigated. There might be instances of this; but they could never be cured, while slavery existed. Slavery took away more than half of the human character. Hence the practice, where it existed, of rejecting the testimony of the slave: but, if this testimony was rejected, where could be his redress against his oppressor?

Having shown the inhumanity, he would proceed to the second point in the resolution, or the injustice of the trade. We had two ideas of justice, first, as it belonged to society by virtue of a social compact; and, secondly, as it belonged to men, not as citizens of a community, but as beings of one common nature. In a state of nature, man had a right to the fruit of his own labour absolutely to himself; and one of the main purposes, for which he entered into society, was that he might be better protected in the possession of his rights. In both cases therefore it was manifestly unjust, that a man should be made to labour during the whole of his life, and yet have no benefit from his labour. Hence the Slave Trade and the colonial slavery were a violation of the very principle, upon which all law for the pro-

tection of property was founded. Whatever benefit was derived from that trade to an individual, it was derived from dishonour and dishonesty. He forced from the unhappy victim of it that, which the latter did not wish to give him; and he gave to the same victim that, which he in vain attempted to show was an equivalent to the thing he took,—it being a thing for which there was no equivalent; and which, if he had not obtained by force, he would not have possessed at all. Nor could there be any answer to this reasoning, unless it could be proved, that it had pleased God to give to the inhabitants of Britain a property in the liberty and life of the natives of Africa. But he would go further on this subject. The injustice complained of was not confined to the bare circumstance of robbing them of the right to their own labour. It was conspicuous throughout the system. They, who bought them, became guilty of all the crimes which had been committed in procuring them; and, when they possessed them, of all the crimes which belonged to their inhuman treatment. The injustice in the latter case amounted frequently to murder. For what was it but murder to pursue a practice, which produced untimely death to thousands of innocent and helpless beings? It was a duty, which their lordships owed to their Creator, if they hoped for mercy, to do away this monstrous oppression.

With respect to the impolicy of the trade, (the third point in the resolution,) he would say at once, that whatever was inhuman and unjust must be impolitic. He had, however, no objection to argue the point upon its own particular merits: and, first, he would observe, that a great man, Mr. Pitt, now no more, had exerted his vast powers on many subjects, to the admiration of his hearers; but on none more successfully than on the subject of the abolition of the Slave Trade. He proved, after making an allowance for the price paid for the slaves in the West Indies, for the loss of them in the seasoning, and for the expense of maintaining them afterwards; and comparing these particulars with the amount in value of their labour there, that the evils endured by the victims of the traffic were no gain to the master, in whose service they took place. Indeed, Mr. Long had laid it down in

his *History of Jamaica*, that the best way to secure the planters from ruin would be to do that which the resolution recommended. It was notorious, that when any planter was in distress, and sought to relieve himself by increasing the labour on his estate, by means of the purchase of new slaves, the measure invariably tended to his destruction. What then was the importation of fresh Africans, but a system tending to the general ruin of the islands?

But it had often been said, that without fresh importations the population of the slaves could not be supported in the islands. This, however, was a mistake. It had arisen from reckoning the deaths of the imported Africans, of whom so many were lost in the seasoning, among the deaths of the Creole slaves. He did not mean to say that, under the existing degree of misery, the population would greatly increase; but, he would maintain, that if the deaths and the births were calculated upon those, who were either born, or who had been a long time in the islands, so as to be considered as natives, it would be found that the population had not only been kept up, but that it had been increased.

If it was true, that the labour of a free-man was cheaper than that of a slave; and, also, that the labour of a long-imported slave was cheaper than that of a fresh-imported one; and, again, that the chances of mortality were much more numerous among the newly-imported slaves in the West Indies, than among those of old standing there, (propositions, which he took to be established,) we should see new arguments for the impolicy of the trade.

It might be stated also, that the importation of vast bodies of men, who had been robbed of their rights, and grievously irritated on that account, into our colonies, (where their miserable condition opened new sources of anger and revenge,) was the importation only of the seeds of insurrection into them. And here he could not but view with astonishment the reasoning of the West Indian planters, who held up the example of St. Domingo as a warning against the abolition of the Slave Trade; because the continuance of it was one of the great causes of the insurrections and subsequent miseries in that devoted island.

Let us but encourage importations in the same rapid progression of increase every year, which took place in St. Domingo, and we should witness the same effect in our own islands.

To expose the impolicy of the trade further, he would observe, that it was an allowed axiom, that as the condition of man was improved, he became more useful. The history of our own country, in very early times, exhibited instances of internal slavery, and this to a considerable extent. But we should find that precisely in proportion as that slavery was ameliorated, the power and prosperity of the country flourished. This was exactly applicable to the case in question. There could be no general amelioration of slavery in the West Indies, while the Slave Trade lasted: but if we were to abolish it, we should make it the interest of every owner of slaves to do that, which would improve their condition, and which, indeed, would lead ultimately to the annihilation of slavery itself. This great event, however, could not be accomplished at once; it could only be effected in a course of time.

It would be endless, he said, to go into all the cases, which would manifest the impolicy of this odious traffic. Inhuman as it was, unjust as it was, he believed it to be equally impolitic; and if their Lordships should be of this opinion also, he hoped they would agree to that part of the resolution, in which these truths were expressed. With respect to the other part of it, or that they would proceed to abolish the trade, he observed, that neither the time, nor the manner of doing it, were specified. Hence, if any of them should differ as to these particulars, they might yet vote for the resolution, as they were not pledged to anything definite in these respects, provided they thought that the trade should be abolished at some time or other: and he did not believe that there was any one of them who would sanction its continuance for ever.

Lord Hawkesbury said, that he did not mean to discuss the question, on the ground of justice and humanity, as contradistinguished from sound policy. If it could fairly be made out that the African Slave Trade was contrary to justice and humanity, it ought to be abolished. It did not, however, follow, because a great evil

subsisted, that therefore it should be removed; for it might be comparatively a less evil, than that which would accompany the attempt to remove it. The noble lord, who had just spoken, had exemplified this; for though slavery was a great evil in itself, he was of opinion that it could not be done away, but in a course of time.

A state of slavery, he said, had existed in Africa from the earliest time; and, unless other nations would concur with England in the measure of the abolition, we could not change it for the better.

Slavery had existed also throughout all Europe. It had now happily, in a great measure, been done away. But how? Not by acts of parliament, for these might have retarded the event, but by the progress of civilization, which removed the evil in a gradual and rational manner.

He then went over the same ground of argument, as when a member of the Commons in 1792. He said that the inhumanity of the abolition was visible in this, that not one slave less would be taken from Africa; and that such as were taken from it, would suffer more than they did now, in the hands of foreigners. He maintained also, as before, that the example of St. Domingo afforded one of the strongest arguments against the abolition of the trade. And he concluded by objecting to the resolution, inasmuch as it could do no good, for the substance of it would be to be discussed again in a future session.

The Bishop of London, Dr. Porteus, began, by noticing the concession of the last speaker, namely, that if the trade was contrary to humanity and justice, it ought to be abolished. He expected, he said, that the noble lord would have proved that it was not contrary to these great principles, before he had supported its continuance; but not a word had he said to show that the basis of the resolution in these respects was false. It followed then, he thought, that as the noble lord had not disproved the premises, he was bound to abide by the conclusion.

The ways, he said, in which the Africans were reduced to slavery in their own country, were by wars,—many of which were excited for the purpose,—by the breaking up of villages, by kid-

napping, and by conviction for a violation of their own laws. Of the latter class many were accused falsely, and of crimes which did not exist. He then read a number of extracts from the evidence examined before the privy council, and from the histories of those, who, having lived in Africa, had thrown light upon this subject before the question was agitated. All these, he said, (and similar instances could be multiplied,) proved the truth of the resolution, that the African Slave Trade was contrary to the principles of humanity, justice, and sound policy.

It was moreover, he said, contrary to the principles of the religion we professed. It was not superfluous to say this, when it had been so frequently asserted that it was sanctioned both by the Jewish and the Christian dispensations. With respect to the Jews he would observe, that there was no such thing as perpetual slavery among them. Their slaves were of two kinds, those of their own nation, and those from the country round about them. The former were to be set free on the seventh year; and the rest, of whatever nation, on the fiftieth, or on the year of Jubilee. With respect to the Christian dispensation, it was a libel to say that it countenanced such a traffic. It opposed it both in its spirit and in its principle; nay, it opposed it positively, for it classed men-stealers, or slave traders, among the murderers of fathers and mothers, and the most profane criminals upon earth.

The antiquity of slavery in Africa, which the noble lord had glanced at, afforded, he said, no argument for its continuance. Such a mode of defence would prevent for ever the removal of any evil; it would justify the practice of the Chinese, who exposed their infants in the streets to perish; it would also justify piracy, for that practice existed long before we knew anything of the African Slave Trade.

He then combatted the argument, that we did a kindness to the Africans by taking them from their homes; and concluded, by stating to their lordships, that, if they refused to sanction the resolution, they would establish these principles, "that though individuals might not rob and murder, yet that nations might—that though individuals incurred the penalties of death by such practices, yet that bodies of men might commit them with impunity for the

purposes of lucre,—and that for such purposes they were not only to be permitted, but encouraged."

The Lord Chancellor (Erskine) confessed that he was not satisfied with his own conduct on this subject. He acknowledged, with deep contrition, that, during the time he was a member of the other House, he had not once attended when this great question was discussed.

In the West Indies he could say, personally, that the slaves were well treated, where he had an opportunity of seeing them. But no judgment was to be formed there with respect to the evils complained of; they must be appreciated as they existed in the trade. Of these he had also been an eye-witness. It was on this account that he felt contrition for not having attended the House on this subject, for there were some cruelties in this traffic which the human imagination could not aggravate. He had witnessed such scenes over the whole coast of Africa; and he could say, that if their lordships could only have a sudden glimpse of them, they would be struck with horror, and would be astonished that they could ever have been permitted to exist. What then would they say to their continuance year after year, and from age to age?

From information, which he could not dispute, he was warranted in saying, that, on this continent, husbands were fraudulently and forcibly severed from their wives, and parents from their children; and that all the ties of blood and affection were torn up by the roots. He had himself seen the unhappy natives put together in heaps in the hold of a ship, where, with every possible attention to them, their situation must have been intolerable. He had also heard proved, in courts of justice, facts still more dreadful than those which he had seen. One of these he would just mention. The slaves on board a certain ship rose in a mass to liberate themselves, and having advanced far in the pursuit of their object, it became necessary to repel them by force. Some of them yielded, some of them were killed in the scuffle, but many of them actually jumped into the sea and were drowned, thus preferring death to the misery of their situation; while others hung to the ship, repenting of their rashness, and bewailing with

frightful noises their horrid fate. Thus the whole vessel exhibited but one hideous scene of wretchedness. They who were subdued and secured in chains were seized with the flux, which carried many of them off. These things were proved in a trial before a British jury, which had to consider whether this was a loss which fell within the policy of insurance, the slaves being regarded as if they had been only a cargo of dead matter. He could mention other instances, but they were much too shocking to be described. Surely their lordships could never consider such a traffic to be consistent with humanity or justice. It was impossible.

That the trade had long subsisted there was no doubt, but this was no argument for its continuance. Many evils of much longer standing had been done away, and it was always our duty to attempt to remove them. Should we not exult in the consideration, that we, the inhabitants of a small island, at the extremity of the globe, almost at its north pole, were become the morning-star to enlighten the nations of the earth, and to conduct them out of the shades of darkness into the realms of light; thus exhibiting to an astonished and an admiring world the blessings of a free constitution? Let us then not allow such a glorious opportunity to escape us.

It had been urged that we should suffer by the abolition of the Slave Trade; he believed that we should not suffer. He believed that our duty and our interest were inseparable; and he had no difficulty in saying, in the face of the world, that his own opinion was, that the interests of a nation would be best preserved by its adherence to the principles of humanity, justice, and religion.

The Earl of Westmoreland said, that the African Slave Trade might be contrary to humanity and justice, and yet it might be politic; at least, it might be inconsistent with humanity, and yet not be inconsistent with justice; this was the case when we executed a criminal, or engaged in war.

It was, however, not contrary to justice, for justice, in this case, must be measured by the law of nations. But the purchase of slaves was not contrary to this law. The Slave Trade was a trade with the consent of the inhabitants of two nations, and pro-

cured by no terror, nor by any act of violence whatever. Slavery had existed from the first ages of the world, not only in Africa, but throughout the habitable globe, among the Persians, Greeks, and Romans; and he would compare, with great advantage to his argument, the wretched condition of the slaves in these ancient states with that of those in our colonies. Slavery too had been allowed in a nation which was under the especial direction of Providence; the Jews were allowed to hold the heathen in bondage. He admitted that what the learned prelate had said relative to the emancipation of the latter in the year of jubilee was correct; but he denied that his quotation relative to the stealers of men referred to the Christian religion. It was a mere allusion to that which was done contrary to the law of nations, which was the only measure of justice between states.

With respect to the inhumanity of the trade, he would observe, that if their lordships, sitting there as legislators, were to set their faces against everything which appeared to be inhuman, much of the security on which their lives and property depended might be shaken, if not totally destroyed. The question was, not whether there was not some evil attending the Slave Trade, but whether by the measure now before them they should increase or diminish the quantity of human misery in the world. He believed, for one, considering the internal state of Africa, and the impossibility of procuring the concurrence of foreign nations in the measure, that they would not be able to do any good by the adoption of it.

As to the impolicy of the trade, the policy of it, on the other hand, was so great, that he trembled at the consequences of its abolition. The property connected with this question amounted to a hundred millions. The annual produce of the islands was eighteen millions, and it yielded a revenue of four millions annually. How was this immense property and income to be preserved? Some had said it would be preserved, because the black population in the islands could be kept up without further supplies; but the planters denied this assertion, and they were the best judges of the subject.

He condemned the resolution as a libel upon the wisdom of

the law of the land, and upon the conduct of their ancestors. He condemned it also, because, if followed up, it would lead to the abolition of the trade, and the abolition of the trade to the emancipation of the slaves in our colonies.

The Bishop of St. Asaph (Dr. Horsley) said, that, allowing the slaves in the West Indies even to be pampered with delicacies, or to be put to rest on a bed of roses, they could not be happy, for—a slave would be still a slave. The question, however, was not concerning the alteration of their condition, but whether we should abolish the practice, by which they were put in that condition? Whether it was humane, just, and politic in us so to place them? This question was easily answered; for he found it difficult to form any one notion of humanity, which did not include a desire of promoting the happiness of others; and he knew of no other justice than that, which was founded on the principle of doing to others, as we should wish they should do to us. And these principles of humanity and justice were so clear, that he found it difficult to make them clearer. Perhaps no difficulty was greater than that of arguing a self-evident proposition, and such he took to be the character of the proposition, that the Slave Trade was inhuman and unjust.

It had been said, that slavery had existed from the beginning of the world. He would allow it. But had such a trade as the Slave Trade ever existed before? Would the noble Earl, who had talked of the slavery of ancient Rome and Greece, assert, that in the course of his whole reading, however profound it might have been, he had found anything resembling such a traffic? Where did it appear in history, that ships were regularly fitted out to fetch away tens of thousands of persons annually, against their will, from their native land; that these were subject to personal indignities and arbitrary punishments during their transportation; and that a certain proportion of them, owing to suffocation and other cruel causes, uniformly perished? He averred, that nothing like the African Slave Trade was ever practised in any nation upon earth.

If the trade then was repugnant, as he maintained it was, to

justice and humanity, he did not see how, without aiding and abetting injustice and inhumanity, any man could sanction it: and he thought that the noble baron (Hawkesbury) was peculiarly bound to support the resolution; for he had admitted that if it could be shown, that the trade was contrary to these principles, the question would be at an end. Now this contrariety had been made apparent, and his lordship had not even attempted to refute it.

He would say but little on the subject of revealed religion, as it related to this question, because the reverend prelate, near him, had spoken so fully upon it. He might observe, however, that at the end of the sixth year, when the Hebrew slave was emancipated, he was to be furnished liberally from the flock, the floor, and the wine-press of his master.

Lord Holland lamented the unfaithfulness of the noble baron (Hawkesbury) to his own principles, and the inflexible opposition of the noble earl (Westmoreland), from both which circumstances he despaired for ever of any assistance from them to this glorious cause. The latter wished to hear evidence on the subject, for the purpose, doubtless, of delay. He was sure, that the noble earl did not care what the evidence would say on either side; for his mind was made up, that the trade ought not to be abolished.

The noble earl had made a difference between humanity, justice, and sound policy. God forbid, that we should ever admit such distinctions in this country! But he had gone further, and said, that a thing might be inhuman, and yet not unjust; and he put the case of the execution of a criminal in support of it. Did he not by this position confound all notions of right and wrong in human institutions? When a criminal was justly executed, was not the execution justice to him who suffered, and humanity to the body of the people at large?

The noble earl had said also, that we should do no good by the abolition, because other nations would not concur in it. He did not know what other nations would do; but this he knew, that we ourselves ought not to be unjust because they should refuse to be honest. It was, however, self-obvious, that, if we

admitted no more slaves into our colonies, the evil would be considerably diminished.

Another of his arguments did not appear to be more solid; for surely the Slave Trade ought not to be continued, merely because the effect of the abolition might ultimately be that of the emancipation of the slaves; an event, which would be highly desirable in its due time.

The noble lord had also said, that the planters were against the abolition, and that without their consent it could never be accomplished. He differed from him in both these points: for, first, he was a considerable planter himself, and yet he was a friend to the measure: secondly, by cutting off all further supplies, the planters would be obliged to pay more attention to the treatment of their slaves, and this treatment would render the trade unnecessary.

The noble earl had asserted also, that the population in the West Indies could not be kept up without further importations; and this was the opinion of the planters, who were the best judges of the subject. As a planter he differed from his lordship again. If, indeed, all the waste lands were to be brought into cultivation, the present population would be insufficient. But the government had already determined, that the trade should not be continued for such a purpose. We were no longer to continue pirates, or executioners for every petty tyrant in Africa, in order that every holder of a bit of land in our islands might cultivate the whole of his allotment; a work, which might require centuries. Making this exception, he would maintain, that no further importations were necessary. Few or no slaves had been imported into Antigua for many years; and he believed, that even some had been exported from it. As to Jamaica, although in one year fifteen thousand died in consequence of hurricane and famine, the excess of deaths over the births during the twenty years preceding 1788 was only one per cent. Deducting, however, the mortality of the newly imported slaves, and making the calculation upon the Negroes born in the island or upon those who had been long there, he believed the births and the deaths would be found equal. He had a right therefore to argue that

the Negroes, with better treatment (which the abolition would secure), would not only maintain but increase their population, without any aid from Africa. He would add, that the newly imported Africans brought with them not only disorders which ravaged the plantations, but danger from the probability of insurrections. He wished most heartily for the total abolition of the trade. He was convinced, that it was both inhuman, unjust, and impolitic. This had always been his opinion as an individual since he was capable of forming one. It was his opinion then as a legislator. It was his opinion as a colonial proprietor; and it was his opinion as an Englishman, wishing for the prosperity of the British empire.

The Earl of Suffolk contended, that the population of the slaves in the islands could be kept up by good treatment, so as to be sufficient for their cultivation. He entered into a detail of calculations from the year 1772 downwards in support of this statement. He believed all the miseries of St. Domingo arose from the vast importation of Africans. He had such a deep sense of the inhumanity and injustice of the Slave Trade, that, if ever he wished any action of his life to be recorded, it would be that of the vote he should then give in support of the resolution.

Lord Sidmouth said, that he agreed to the substance of the resolution, but yet he could not support it. Could he be convinced that the trade would be injurious to the cause of humanity and justice, the question with him would be decided; for policy could not be opposed to humanity and justice. He had been of opinion for the last twenty years, that the interests of the country and those of numerous individuals were so deeply blended with this traffic, that we should be very cautious how we proceeded. With respect to the cultivation of new lands, he would not allow a single Negro to be imported for such a purpose; but he must have a regard to the old plantations. When he found a sufficient increase in the Black population to continue the cultivation already established there, then, but not till then, he would agree to an abolition of the trade.

Earl Stanhope said he would not detain their lordships long. He could not, however, help expressing his astonishment at what

had fallen from the last speaker; for he had evidently confessed that the Slave Trade was inhuman and unjust, and then he had insinuated, that it was neither inhuman nor unjust to continue it. A more paradoxical or whimsical opinion, he believed, was never entertained, or more whimsically expressed in that house. The noble viscount had talked of the interests of the planters: but this was but a part of the subject; for surely the people of Africa were not to be forgotten. He did not understand the practice of complimenting the planters with the lives of men, women, and helpless children by thousands, for the sake of their pecuniary advantage; and they, who adopted it, whatever they might think of the consistency of their own conduct, offered an insult to the sacred names of humanity and justice.

The noble Earl (Westmoreland) had asked what would be the practical effect of the abolition of the Slave Trade. He would inform him. It would do away the infamous practices which took place in Africa; it would put an end to the horrors of the passage; it would save many thousands of our fellow-creatures from the miseries of eternal slavery; it would oblige the planters to treat those better, who were already in that unnatural state; it would increase the population of our islands; it would give a death-blow to the diabolical calculations, whether it was cheaper to work the Negroes to death and recruit the gangs by fresh importations, or to work them moderately and to treat them kindly. He knew of no event, which would be attended with so many blessings.

There was but one other matter, which he would notice. The noble baron (Hawkesbury) had asserted, that all the horrors of St. Domingo were the consequence of the speculative opinions which were current in a neighbouring kingdom on the subject of liberty. They had, he said, no such origin. They were owing to two causes; first, to the vast number of Negroes recently imported into that island; and, secondly, to a scandalous breach of faith by the French legislature. This legislature held out the idea not only of the abolition of the Slave Trade, but also of all slavery; but it broke its word. It held forth the rights of man to the whole human race, and then, in practice, it most infamously

abandoned every article in these rights; so that it became the scorn of all the enlightened and virtuous part of mankind. These were the great causes of the miseries of St. Domingo, and not the speculative opinions of France.

Earl Grosvenor could not but express the joy he felt at the hope, after all his disappointments, that this wicked trade would be done away. He hoped that his Majesty's ministers were in earnest, and that they would, early in the next session, take this great question up with a determination to go through with it; so that another year should not pass before we extended the justice and humanity of the country to the helpless and unhappy inhabitants of Africa.

Earl Fitzwilliam said he was fearful lest the calamities of St. Domingo should be brought home to our own islands. We ought not, he thought, too hastily to adopt the resolution on that account. He should therefore support the previous question.

Lord Ellenborough said, he was sorry to differ from his noble friend (Lord Sidmouth), and yet he could not help saying that if after twenty years, during which this question had been discussed by both Houses of Parliament, their lordships' judgments were not ripe for its determination, he could not look with any confidence to a time when they would be ready to decide it.

The question then before them was short and plain. It was, whether the African Slave Trade was inhuman, unjust, and impolitic. If the premises were true, we could not too speedily bring it to a conclusion.

The subject had been frequently brought before him in a way which had enabled him to become acquainted with it; and he was the more anxious on that account to deliver his sentiments upon it as a peer of Parliament, without reference to anything he had been called upon to do in the discharge of his professional duty. When he looked at the mode in which this traffic commenced, by the spoliation of the rights of a whole quarter of the globe; by the misery of whole nations of helpless Africans; by tearing them from their homes, their families, and their friends; when he saw the unhappy victims carried away by force; thrust into a dungeon in the hold of a ship, in which the interval of

their passage from their native to a foreign land was filled up with misery, under every degree of debasement, and in chains; and when he saw them afterwards consigned to an eternal slavery, he could not but contemplate the whole system with horror. It was inhuman in its beginning, inhuman in its progress, and inhuman to the very end.

Nor was it more inhuman than it was unjust. The noble earl, (Westmoreland,) in adverting to this part of the question had considered it as a question of justice between two nations, but it was a moral question. Although the natives of Africa might be taken by persons authorized by their own laws to take and dispose of them, and the practice, therefore, might be said to be legal as it respected them, yet no man could doubt, whatever ordinances they might have to sanction it, that it was radically, essentially, and in principle, unjust; and therefore there could be no excuse for us in continuing it. On the general principle of natural justice, which was paramount to all ordinances of men, it was quite impossible to defend this traffic; and he agreed with the noble baron (Hawkesbury) that, having decided that it was inhuman and unjust, we should not inquire whether it was impolitic. Indeed, the inquiry itself would be impious; for it was the common ordinance of God, that that which was inhuman and unjust, should never be for the good of man. Its impolicy, therefore, was included in its injustice and its inhumanity. And he had no doubt, when the importations were stopped, that the planters would introduce a change of system among their slaves which would increase their population, so as to render any further supplies from Africa unnecessary. It had been proved, indeed, that the Negro population in some of the islands was already in this desirable state. Many other happy effects would follow. As to the losses which would arise from the abolition of the Slave Trade, they, who were interested in the continuance of it, had greatly over-rated them. When pleading formerly in his professional capacity for the merchants of Liverpool at their lordships' bar, he had often delivered statements, which he had received from them, and which he afterwards discovered to be grossly incorrect. He could say from his own knowledge,

that the assertion of the noble earl (Westmoreland), that property to the amount of a hundred millions would be endangered, was wild and fanciful. He would not however deny, that some loss might accompany the abolition; but there could be no difficulty in providing for it. Such a consideration ought not to be allowed to impede their progress in getting rid of an horrible injustice.

But it had been said that we should do but little in the cause of humanity by abolishing the Slave Trade; because other nations would continue it. He did not believe they would. He knew that America was about to give it up. He believed the states of Europe would give it up. But, supposing that they were all to continue it, would not our honour be the greater? Would not our virtue be the more signal? for then

> ——————— Faithful we
> Among the faithless found:

to which he would add, that undoubtedly we should diminish the evil, as far as the number of miserable beings was concerned, which was accustomed to be transported to our own colonies.

Earl Spencer agreed with the noble viscount (Sidmouth), that the amelioration of the condition of the slaves was an object, which might be effected in the West Indies; but he was certain, that the most effectual way of improving it would be by the total and immediate abolition of the Slave Trade; and for that reason he would support the resolution. Had the resolution held out emancipation to them, it would not have had his assent; for it would have ill become the character of this country, if it had been once promised, to have withheld it from them. It was to such deception that the horrors of St. Domingo were to be attributed. He would not enter into the discussion of the general subject at present. He was convinced that the trade was what the resolution stated it to be, inhuman, unjust, and impolitic. He wished therefore, most earnestly indeed, for its abolition. As to the mode of effecting it, it should be such as would be attended with the least inconvenience to all parties. At the same time he would not allow small inconveniences to stand in the way of the great claims of humanity, justice, and religion.

The question was then put on the resolution, and carried by a majority of forty-one to twenty. The same address also to His Majesty, which had been agreed upon by the Commons, was directly afterwards moved. This also was carried, but without the necessity of a division.

The resolution and the motion having passed both Houses, one other parliamentary measure was yet necessary to complete the proceedings of this session. It was now almost universally believed, in consequence of what had already taken place there, that the Slave Trade had received its death-wound; and that it would not long survive it. It was supposed, therefore, that the slave-merchants would, in the interim, fit out not only all the vessels they had, but even buy others, to make what might be called their last harvest. Hence, extraordinary scenes of rapine and murder would be occasioned in Africa. To prevent these, a new bill was necessary. This was accordingly introduced into the Commons. It enacted, but with one exception, that from and after the first of August, 1806, no vessel should clear out for the Slave Trade, unless it should have been previously employed by the same owner or owners in the said trade, or should be proved to have been contracted for previously to the 10th of June, 1806, for the purpose of being employed in that trade. It may now be sufficient to say that this bill also passed both Houses of Parliament; soon after which the session ended.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Continuation from July 1806, to March 1807.—Death of Mr. Fox.—Bill for the total abolition of the Slave Trade carried in the House of Lords; sent from thence to the Commons; amended and passed there; carried back, and passed with its amendments by the Lords; receives the royal assent. —Reflections on this great event.

It was impossible for the committee to look back to the proceedings of the last session, as they related to the great question under their care, without feeling a profusion of joy, as well as of gratitude to those, by whose virtuous endeavours they had taken place. But, alas, how few of our earthly pleasures come to us without alloy! a melancholy event succeeded. We had the painful intelligence, in the month of October 1806, that one of the oldest and warmest friends of the cause was then numbered with the dead.

Of the character of Mr. Fox, as it related to this cause, I am bound to take notice. And, first, I may observe, that he professed an attachment to it almost as soon as it was ushered into the world. Early in the year 1788, when he was waited upon by a deputation of the committee, his language was, as has appeared in the first volume, "that he would support their object to its fullest extent, being convinced that there was no remedy for the evil but in the total abolition of the trade."

His subsequent conduct evinced the sincerity of his promises. He was constant in his attendance in Parliament whenever the question was brought forward; and he never failed to exert his powerful eloquence in its favour. The countenance, indeed, which he gave it, was of the greatest importance to its welfare; for most of his parliamentary friends, who followed his general political sentiments, patronized it also. By the aid of these, joined to that of the private friends of Mr. Pitt, and of other members, who espoused it without reference to party, it was

always so upheld, that after the year 1791 no one of the defeats which it sustained, was disgraceful. The majority on the side of those interested in the continuance of the trade was always so trifling, that the abolitionists were preserved a formidable body, and their cause respectable.

I never heard whether Mr. Fox, when he came into power, made any stipulations with His Majesty on the subject of the Slave Trade: but this I know, that he determined upon the abolition of it, if it were practicable, as the highest glory of his administration, and as the greatest earthly blessing which it was in the power of the Government to bestow; and that he took considerable pains to convince some of his colleagues in the cabinet of the propriety of the measure.

When the resolution, which produced the debates in parliament, as detailed in the last chapter, was under contemplation, it was thought expedient that Mr. Fox, as the minister of state in the House of Commons, should introduce it himself. When applied to for this purpose he cheerfully undertook the office, thus acting in consistency with his public declaration in the year 1791, "that in whatever situation he might ever be, he would use his warmest efforts for the promotion of this righteous cause."

Before the next measure, or the bill to prevent the sailing of any new vessel in the trade after the 1st of August, was publicly disclosed, it was suggested to him, that the session was nearly over; that he might possibly weary both Houses by another motion on the subject; and that, if he were to lose it, or to experience a diminution of his majorities in either, he might injure the cause, which was then in the road to triumph. To this objection he replied, "that he believed both Houses were disposed to get rid of the trade; that his own life was precarious; that if he omitted to serve the injured Africans on this occasion, he might have no other opportunity of doing it; and that he dared not, under these circumstances, neglect so great a duty."

This prediction relative to himself became unfortunately verified; for his constitution, after this, began to decline, till at length his mortal destiny, in the eyes of his medical attendants,

was sealed. But even then, when removed by pain and sickness from the discussion of political subjects, he never forgot this cause. In his own sufferings he was not unmindful of those of the injured Africans. "Two things," said he, on his death-bed, "I wish earnestly to see accomplished,—peace with Europe—and the abolition of the Slave Trade." But knowing well, that we could much better protect ourselves against our own external enemies, than this helpless people against their oppressors, he added, "but of the two I wish the latter." These sentiments he occasionally repeated, so that the subject was frequently in his thoughts in his last illness. Nay, "the very hope of the abolition (to use the expression of Lord Howick in the House of Commons) quivered on his lips in the last hour of it." Nor is it improbable, if earthly scenes ever rise to view at that awful crisis, and are perceptible, that it might have occupied his mind in the last moment of his existence. Then indeed would joy ineffable, from a conviction of having prepared the way for rescuing millions of human beings from misery, have attended the spirit on its departure from the body; and then also would this spirit, most of all purified when in the contemplation of peace, good-will, and charity upon earth, be in the fittest state, on gliding from its earthly cavern, to commix with the endless ocean of benevolence and love.

At length the session of 1807 commenced. It was judged advisable by Lord Grenville, that the expected motion on this subject should, contrary to the practice hitherto adopted, be agitated first in the Lords. Accordingly, on the 2nd of January he presented a bill, called an act for the abolition of the Slave Trade; but he then proposed only to print it, and to let it lie on the table, that it might be maturely considered, before it should be discussed.

On the 4th, no less than four counsel were heard against the bill.

On the 5th the debate commenced. But of this I shall give no detailed account; nor, indeed, of any of those which followed it. The truth is, that the subject has been exhausted. They, who spoke in favour of the abolition, said very little that was

new concerning it. They, who spoke against it, brought forward, as usual, nothing but negative assertions and fanciful conjectures. To give therefore what was said by both parties at these times, would be but useless repetition*. To give, on the other hand, that which was said on one side only would appear partial. Hence I shall offer to the reader little more than a narrative of facts upon these occasions.

Lord Grenville opened the debate by a very luminous speech. He was supported by the Duke of Gloucester, the Bishop of Durham (Dr. Barrington), the Earls Moira, Selkirk, and Roslyn, and the Lords Holland, King, and Hood. The opponents of the bill were the Duke of Clarence, the Earls of Westmoreland and St. Vincent, and the Lords Sidmouth, Eldon, and Hawkesbury.

The question being called for at four o'clock in the morning, it appeared that the personal votes and proxies in favour of Lord Grenville's motion amounted to one hundred, and those against it to thirty-six. Thus passed the first bill in England, which decreed, that the African Slave Trade should cease. And here I cannot omit paying to his Highness the Duke of Gloucester the tribute of respect, which is due to him, for having opposed the example of his royal relations on this subject in behalf of an helpless and oppressed people. The sentiments too, which he delivered on this occasion, ought not to be forgotten. "This trade," said he, "is contrary to the principles of the British constitution. It is, besides, a cruel and criminal traffic in the blood of my fellow-creatures. It is a foul stain on the national character. It is an offence to the Almighty. On every ground therefore on which a decision can be made; on the ground of policy, of liberty, of humanity, of justice, but, above all, on the ground of religion, I shall vote for its immediate extinction."

On the 10th of February, the bill was carried to the House of Commons. On the 20th counsel were heard against it; after

* The different debates in both Houses on this occasion would occupy the half of another volume. This is another circumstance, which reconciles me to the omission. But that, which reconciles me the most is, that they will be soon published. In these debates justice has been done to every individual concerned in them.

which, by agreement, the second reading of it took place. On the 23rd the question being put for the commitment of it, Lord Viscount Howick (now Earl Grey) began an eloquent speech. After he had proceeded in it some way, he begged leave to enter his protest against certain principles of relative justice, which had been laid down. "The merchants and planters," said he, "have an undoubted right, in common with other subjects of the realm, to demand justice at our hands. But that, which they denominate justice, does not correspond with the legitimate character of that virtue: for they call upon us to violate the rights of others, and to transgress our own moral duties. That, which they distinguish as justice, involves in itself the greatest injury to others. It is not, in fact, justice, which they demand, but—favour—and favour to themselves at the expense of the most grievous oppression of their fellow-creatures."

He then argued the question on the ground of policy. He showed, by a number of official documents, how little this trade had contributed to the wealth of the nation, being but a fifty-fourth part of its export trade; and he contended that as four-sevenths of it had been cut off by His Majesty's proclamation, and the passing of the foreign slave bill in a former year, no detriment of any consequence would arise from the present measure.

He entered into an account of the loss of seamen, and of the causes of the mortality, in this trade.

He went largely into the subject of negro-population in the islands from official documents, giving an account of it up to the latest date. He pointed out the former causes of its diminution, and stated how the remedies for these would follow.

He showed how, even if the quantity of colonial produce should be diminished for a time, this disadvantage would, in a variety of instances, be more than counterbalanced by advantages, which would not only be great in themselves, but permanent.

He then entered into a refutation of the various objections which had been made to the abolition, in an eloquent and perspicuous manner; and concluded by appealing to the great authorities of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox in behalf of the proposed measure. "These precious ornaments," he said, "of their age and country,

had examined the subject with all the force of their capacious minds. On this question they had dismissed all animosity—all difference of opinion—and had proceeded in union; and he believed, that the best tribute of respect we could show, or the most splendid monument we could raise, to their memories, would be by the adoption of the glorious measure of the abolition of the Slave Trade."

Lord Howick was supported by Mr. Roscoe, who was then one of the members for Liverpool; by Mr. Lushington, Mr. Fawkes, Lord Mahon, Lord Milton, Sir John Doyle, Sir Samuel Romilly, Mr. Wilberforce, and Earl Percy, the latter of whom wished that a clause might be put into the bill, by which all the children of slaves, born after January 1810, should be made free. General Gascoyne and Mr. Hibbert opposed the bill. Mr. Manning hoped that compensation would be made to the planters in case of loss. Mr. Bathurst and Mr. Hiley Addington preferred a plan for gradual abolition to the present mode. These having spoken, it appeared on a division, that there were for the question two hundred and eighty-three, and against it only sixteen.

Of this majority I cannot but remark, that it was probably the largest that was ever announced on any occasion, where the House was called upon to divide. I must observe, also, that there was such an enthusiasm among the members at this time, that there appeared to be the same kind and degree of feeling, as manifested itself within the same walls in the year 1788, when the question was first started. This enthusiasm, too, which was of a moral nature, was so powerful, that it seemed even to extend to a conversion of the heart; for several of the old opponents of this righteous cause went away, unable to vote against it; while others of them staid in their places, and voted in its favour.

On the 27th of February, Lord Howick moved, that the House resolve itself into a committee on the bill for the abolition of the Slave Trade. Sir C. Pole, Messrs. Hughan, Brown, Bathurst, Windham, and Fuller opposed the motion; and Sir R. Milbank, and Messrs. Wynne, Barham, Courtenay, Montague, Jacob, Whitbread, and Herbert (of Kerry), supported it. At length the committee was allowed to sit *pro formâ*, and Mr.

Hobhouse was put into the chair. The bill then went through it, and, the House being resumed, the report was received and read.

On the 6th of March, when the committee sat again, Sir C. Pole moved, that the year 1812 be substituted for the year 1807, as the time when the trade should be abolished. This amendment produced a long debate, which was carried on by Sir C. Pole, Messrs. Fuller, Hiley Addington, Rose, Gascoyne, and Bathurst, on one side; and by Mr. Ward, Sir P. Francis, General Vyse, Sir T. Turton, Mr. Whitbread, Lord Henry Petty, Messrs. Canning, Stanhope, Perceval, and Wilberforce on the other. At length, on a division, there appeared to be one hundred and twenty-five against the amendment, and for it only seventeen. The chairman then read the bill, and it was agreed that he should report it with the amendments on Monday. The bill enacted, that no vessel should clear out for slaves from any port within the British dominions after the 1st of May, 1807, and that no slave should be landed in the colonies after the 1st of March, 1808.

On the 16th of March, on the motion of Lord Henry Petty, the question was put, that the bill be read a third time. Mr. Hibbert, Captain Herbert, Mr. T. W. Plomer, Mr. Windham, and Lord Castlereagh, spoke against the motion. Sir P. Francis, Mr. Lyttleton, Mr. H. Thornton, and Messrs. Barham, Sheridan, and Wilberforce supported it. After this the bill was passed without a division*.

On Wednesday, the 18th, Lord Howick, accompanied by Mr. Wilberforce and others, carried the bill to the Lords. Lord Grenville, on receiving it, moved that it should be printed, and that, if this process could be finished by Monday, it should be taken into consideration on that day. The reason of this extraordinary haste was, that His Majesty, displeased with the introduction of the Roman Catholic officers' bill into the Commons, had signified his intention to the members of the existing administration, that they were to be displaced.

* S. Lushington, Esq., M.P. for Yarmouth, gave his voluntary attendance and assistance to the committee, during all these motions, and J. Bowdler, Esq., was elected a member of it.

The uneasiness, which, a few days before, had sprung up among the friends of the abolition, on the report that this event was probable, began now to show itself throughout the kingdom. Letters were written from various parts, manifesting the greatest fear and anxiety on account of the state of the bill, and desiring answers of consolation. Nor was this state of the mind otherwise than what might have been expected upon such an occasion; for the bill was yet to be printed. Being an amended one, it was to be argued again in the Lords. It was then to receive the royal assent. All these operations implied time; and it was reported that the new ministry* was formed; among whom were several who had shown a hostile disposition to the cause.

On Monday, the 23rd, the House of Lords met. Such extraordinary diligence had been used in printing the bill, that it was then ready. Lord Grenville immediately brought it forward. The Earl of Westmoreland and the Marquis of Sligo opposed it. The Duke of Norfolk and the Bishop of Llandaff (Dr. Watson) supported it. The latter said, that this great act of justice would be recorded in heaven. The amendments were severally adopted without a division. But here an omission of three words was discovered, namely, "country, territory, or place," which, if not rectified, might defeat the purposes of the bill. An amendment was immediately proposed and carried. Thus the bill received the last sanction of the Peers. Lord Grenville then congratulated the House on the completion, on its part, of the most glorious measure that had ever been adopted by any legislative body in the world.

The amendment now mentioned occasioned the bill to be sent back to the Commons. On the 24th, on the motion of Lord Howick, it was immediately taken into consideration there, and agreed to; and it was carried back to the Lords, as approved of, on the same day.

But though the bill had now passed both houses, there was an awful fear throughout the kingdom lest it should not receive

* The only circumstance, which afforded comfort at this time, was, that the Hon. Spencer Perceval and Mr. Canning were included in it, who were warm patrons of this great measure.

the royal assent before the ministry was dissolved. This event took place the next day; for on Wednesday, the 25th, at half past eleven in the morning, His Majesty's message was delivered to the different members of it, that they were then to wait upon him to deliver up the seals of their offices. It then appeared that a commission for the royal assent to this bill, among others, had been obtained. This commission was instantly opened by the Lord Chancellor (Erskine), who was accompanied by the Lords Holland and Auckland; and as the clock struck twelve, just when the sun was in its meridian splendour to witness this august act, this establishment of a Magna Charta for Africa in Britain, and to sanction it by its most vivid and glorious beams, it was completed. The ceremony being over, the seals of the respective offices were delivered up; so that the execution of this commission was the last act of the administration of Lord Grenville; an administration, which, on account of its virtuous exertions in behalf of the oppressed African race, will pass to posterity, living through successive generations in the love and gratitude of the most virtuous of mankind.

Thus ended one of the most glorious contests, after a continuance for twenty years, of any ever carried on in any age or country. A contest, not of brutal violence, but of reason. A contest between those who felt deeply for the happiness and the honour of their fellow-creatures, and those, who, through vicious custom and the impulse of avarice, had trampled under foot the sacred rights of their nature, and had even attempted to efface all title to the divine image from their minds.

Of the immense advantages of this contest I know not how to speak; indeed, the very agitation of the question which it involved has been highly important. Never was the heart of man so expanded; never were its generous sympathies so generally and so perseveringly excited. These sympathies, thus called into existence, have been useful in the preservation of a national virtue. For anything we know, they may have contributed greatly to form a counteracting balance against the malignant spirit, generated by our almost incessant wars during this period, so as to have preserved us from barbarism.

It has been useful also in the discrimination of moral character; in private life it has enabled us to distinguish the virtuous from the more vicious part of the community*. It has shown the general philanthropist; it has unmasked the vicious in spite of his pretension to virtue. It has afforded us the same knowledge in public life; it has separated the moral statesman from the wicked politician. It has shown us who, in the legislative and executive offices of our country, are fit to save, and who to destroy, a nation.

It has furnished us also with important lessons. It has proved what a creature man is! how devoted he is to his own interest! to what a length of atrocity he can go, unless fortified by religious principle! But as if this part of the prospect would be too afflicting, it has proved to us, on the other hand, what a glorious instrument he may become in the hands of his Maker; and that a little virtue, when properly leavened, is made capable of counteracting the effects of a mass of vice!

With respect to the end obtained by this contest, or the great measure of the abolition of the Slave Trade as it has now passed, I know not how to appreciate its importance; to our own country, indeed, it is invaluable. We have lived, in consequence of it, to see the day, when it has been recorded as a principle in our legislation, that commerce itself shall have its moral boundaries. We have lived to see the day when we are likely to be delivered from the contagion of the most barbarous opinions. They who supported this wicked traffic, virtually denied that man was a moral being; they substituted the law of force for the law of reason: but the great act now under our consideration has banished the impi-

* I have had occasion to know many thousand persons in the course of my travels on this subject, and I can truly say, that the part which these took on this great question was always a true criterion of their moral character. Some indeed opposed the abolition, who seemed to be so respectable, that it was difficult to account for their conduct; but it invariably turned out, in the course of time, either that they had been influenced by interested motives, or that they were not men of steady moral principle. In the year 1792, when the national enthusiasm was so great, the good were as distinguishable from the bad, according to their disposition to this great cause, as if the divine Being had marked them, or, as a friend of mine the other day observed, as we may suppose the sheep to be from the goats on the day of judgment.

ous doctrine, and restored the rational creature to his moral rights. Nor is it a matter of less pleasing consideration, that, at this awful crisis, when the constitutions of kingdoms are on the point of dissolution, the stain of the blood of Africa is no longer upon us, or that we have been freed (alas, if it be not too late!) from a load of guilt, which has long hung like a mill-stone about our necks, ready to sink us to perdition.

In tracing the measure still further, or as it will affect other lands, we become only the more sensible of its importance; for can we pass over to Africa; can we pass over to the numerous islands, the receptacles of miserable beings from thence; and can we call to mind the scenes of misery which have been passing in each of these regions of the earth, without acknowledging that one of the greatest sources of suffering to the human race has, as far as our own power extends, been done way? Can we pass over to these regions again, and contemplate the multitude of crimes which the agency necessary for keeping up the barbarous system produced, without acknowledging that a source of the most monstrous and extensive wickedness has been removed also? But here, indeed, it becomes us peculiarly to rejoice; for though nature shrinks from pain, and compassion is engendered in us when we see it become the portion of others, yet what is physical suffering compared with moral guilt? The misery of the oppressed is, in the first place, not contagious like the crime of the oppressor; nor is the mischief which it generates either so frightful or so pernicious. The body, though under affliction, may retain its shape; and, if it even perish, what is the loss of it but of worthless dust? But when the moral springs of the mind are poisoned, we lose the most excellent part of the constitution of our nature, and the divine image is no longer perceptible in us; nor are the two evils of similar duration. By a decree of Providence, for which we cannot be too thankful, we are made mortal. Hence the torments of the oppressor are but temporary; whereas the immortal part of us, when once corrupted, may carry its pollutions with it into another world.

But, independently of the quantity of physical suffering, and the innumerable avenues to vice, in more than a quarter of the globe, which this great measure will cut off, there are yet blessings,

which we have reason to consider as likely to flow from it. Among these we cannot overlook the great probability that Africa, now freed from the vicious and barbarous effects of this traffic, may be in a better state to comprehend and receive the sublime truths of the Christian religion. Nor can we overlook the probability that, a new system of treatment necessarily springing up in our islands, the same bright sun of consolation may visit her children there. But here a new hope rises to our view. Who knows but that emancipation, like a beautiful plant, may, in its due season, rise out of the ashes of the abolition of the Slave Trade, and that, when its own intrinsic value shall be known, the seed of it may be planted in other lands? And looking at the subject in this point of view, we cannot but be struck with the wonderful concurrence of events as previously necessary for this purpose, namely, that two nations, England and America, the mother and the child, should, in the same month of the same year, have abolished this impious traffic; nations, which at this moment have more than a million of subjects within their jurisdiction to partake of the blessing; and one of which, on account of her local situation and increasing power, is likely in time to give, if not law, at least a tone to the manners and customs of the great continent on which she is situated.

Reader! Thou art now acquainted with the history of this contest! Rejoice in the manner of its termination! And, if thou feelest grateful for the event, retire within thy closet, and pour out thy thanksgivings to the Almighty for this his unspeakable act of mercy to thy oppressed fellow-creatures.

THE END.

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